Who's Who in Canada's Hottest Industries

MACLEAN'S

The POWER LIST

100 CANADIANS SHAPING THE COUNTRY IN

2023

Food TITANS

Political BACKROOMERS

Real Estate REFORMERS

Sports STARS

Gaming TYCOONS

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MACLEAN'S

April 2023 · Volume 136 · Number 3

THE NEW POWER LIST P. 19

After three pandemic-plagued years, Canadians have emerged, squinting and disoriented, into a new world order. Commanding this weird, cool, occasionally scary new reality is a cohort of Canadians whose ideas and inventions are forging new industries and reinventing old ones. Some of the people on our list are already household names. The rest are about to be.

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Cover illustration by Anna Minzhulina

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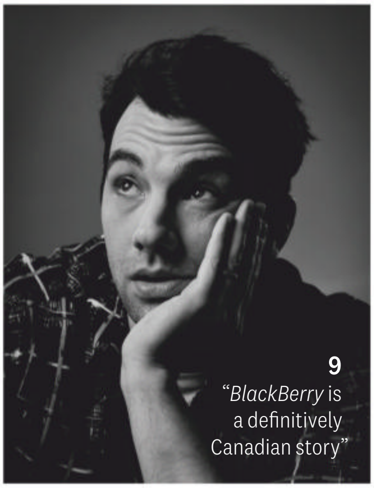

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EDITOR'S NOTE

IN THIS ISSUE OF MACLEAN'S

Late last year, my ancient Hyundai reached the end of its life. It started making an ominous noise and needed costly repairs and, well, pouring money into my hard-working old car didn't seem like a good investment. So instead I bought a newer model. Now I'm enjoying the fact that my car is not on the brink of dying all the time.

But I purchased it with some ambivalence. For one thing, I had the bad luck of needing a car when the industry was still struggling with a global semiconductor chip shortage, so the price was pretty steep. I also felt like I was buying a dinosaur. My car is not an electric vehicle or even a hybrid. How long until it's obsolete?

In downtown Toronto, where I live, Teslas seem to be everywhere all of a sudden. I'm starting to see other brands of EVs, too, like Volvos and Mercedes-Benzes and cars with names that sound like planets or chemicals: Bolt, E-Tron and Ioniq. Only a small fraction of Canadian drivers own EVs at this point, but that's changing rapidly. Our electric charging infrastructure gets better all the time, and the prices of EVs are already starting to drop. Soon, they will truly be ubiquitous, even outside of big urban centres.

To prepare for that moment, there's an EV gold rush. Canada is a global source of lithium—the key ingredient in electric batteries—and other raw materials essential to EVs. One of North America's few lithium mines is in Quebec, 550 kilometres northwest of Montreal. In Ontario, Doug Ford has pledged $1 billion to build an access road to the Ring of Fire, a vast region of mineral deposits about 500 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay.

We're already producing EVs here. Late last year, in Ingersoll, Ontario, GM opened a massively refurbished plant that makes electric delivery vans. Stellantis and LG have plans to build a $5-billion electric vehicle battery plant in Windsor. As much of the Western world is looking to shift supply chains away from China, Canada has a good chance of establishing a sizable foothold in the market.

> "In each section of the Power List, we introduce you to people working to solve the country's knottiest challenges"

In just a few short years, a new group of EV companies has emerged, run by a fresh crop of entrepreneurs. They're competing for corporate partnerships, government support, raw minerals and a slice of the consumer pie. They're guiding the country into a new frontier.

In this issue, our special Power List edition, we highlight the country's most influential people by looking at areas that are particularly dynamic in Canada right now—like the EV industry. In each category, we've picked the 10 most influential leaders. (The power players in the EV world are on page 52.) Some of the fields we showcase are emerging, some are more established but alive with fresh energy, and some are distinguished by leaders trying to solve seemingly intractable problems in areas like affordable housing and health care.

In each section, we introduce you to the Canadians working on creative projects designed to solve the country's knottiest challenges. There are 100 people in total and, taken together, their careers, industries and ambitions paint an exciting portrait of a country at a moment of radical transformation.

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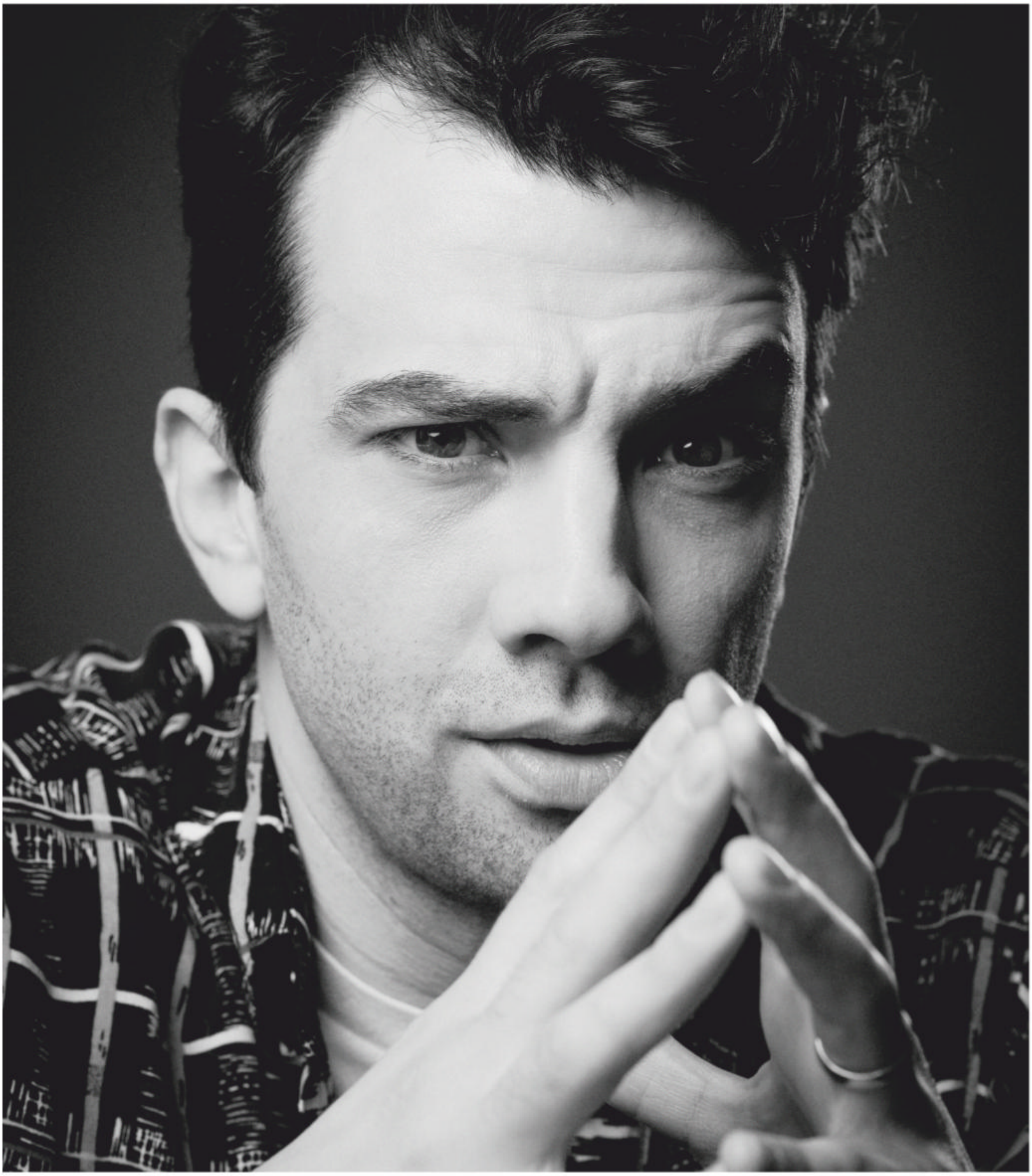
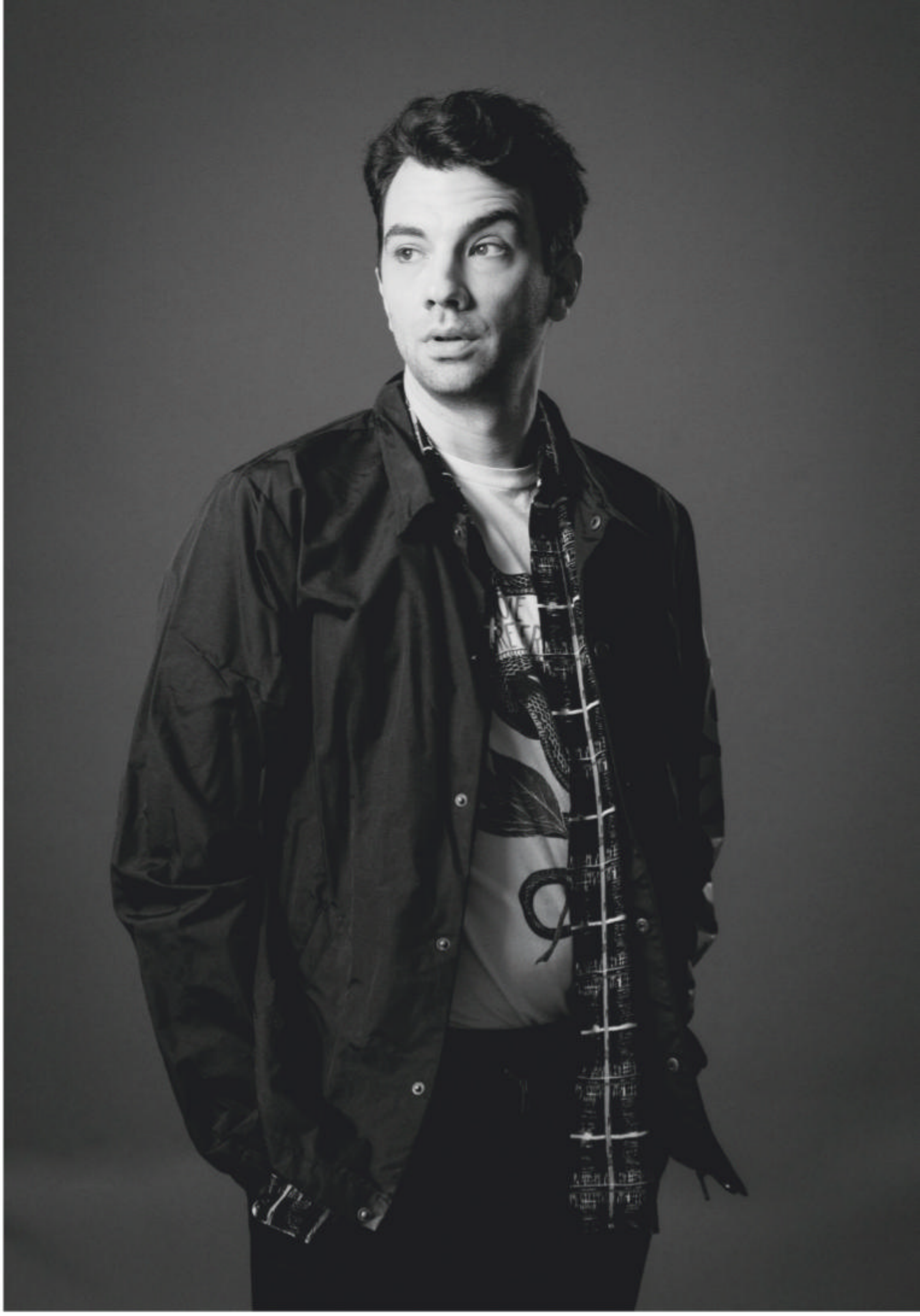
THE INTERVIEW

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE NATION'S NEWSMAKERS



There's nothing actor **Jay Baruchel** loves more than movies—except for maybe his now-obsolete BlackBerry

INTERVIEW BY **JOHANNA SCHNELLER** • PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ERIN LEYDON**



JAY BARUCHEL IS EVERYWHERE: in slashers, sex farces and sports movies; opposite mythical lizards in Disney's *How to Train Your Dragon* franchise; and he's worked with directors as varied as David Cronenberg, Judd Apatow and even himself. If you're wondering how an Ottawa-born, Montreal-raised kid with a Gumby body and a voice like a twisted balloon has been working steadily since 1995 (he's now 40 and busier than ever), the answer is simple: Jay Baruchel loves movies—*loves* them.

Baruchel loved his BlackBerry, too. He hung on to it until 2019. It makes sense, then, that his next movie is, well, *BlackBerry*, which chronicles the rise and fall of Research in Motion, the Waterloo moonshot whose founders had the zany idea to merge computers with cellphones. Baruchel plays Mike Lazaridis, the engineering student turned RIM co-founder who watched his dreams get gobbled up by the iPhone, but not before they made him a billionaire. Playing the more level-headed partner gives Baruchel a chance to showcase his dramatic chops. It also demonstrates why, unlike the now-obsolete gadget, his success continues.

It's rare for someone who's made it in Hollywood to be as proudly Canadian as you.

It's a function of Canadianness to second-guess ourselves, but I was raised to believe this is the best country in the world, warts and all. Part of it is that my maternal granddad was a career soldier, and I have cousins and uncles who are, too. I hope that, one day, it's not so rare for Canadians who love movies to make them here.

What interested you most about the BlackBerry story?

It's a definitively Canadian story, something we can claim. It's also a road map to how we got to this—let's be honest—loathsome modern world we live in. It's Canadian in another way, too, in that a lot of people don't *realize* BlackBerry is Canadian.

Have you heard from any of the real-life RIM figures?

Not yet, even though we shot in Waterloo, where it all happened. I'm interested to see what those guys think—RIM's co-CEO Jim Balsillie in particular, given his temperament.

...**which, in the film, is fractious. Yours, however, is collaborative. You act, write screenplays and direct. When did you first have artistic ambitions?**

I don't remember *not* having them. My first word was a sentence, a slogan from a 1982 commercial: "Come on, Canada! Meet you at the Bay!" When I was seven, my mom filmed me saying, "I want to write stories that scare Stephen King out of his underwear." At nine, I realized: *No, I want to make movies*. So, from 1991 on, that's been my defining ambition. That, and being as good a person as I can be.

Were your parents artistic?

They were huge movie and TV nerds. We

“BlackBerry is a definitively Canadian story, something that we can claim. It’s also a road map to how we got to this—let’s be honest—loathsome modern world we live in.”

didn’t have a ton of money, so we didn’t go to the cinema a lot. But every weekend, my dad would rent two movies. If they were still in the VCR the next morning, I was allowed to watch them. If they were back in the case, my parents had deemed them too racy.

I read somewhere that your father worked as an antiques dealer.
Antiques dealer, hah! That’s the simplest way to describe him. In the 1970s, he was a drug dealer who went to prison. When he got out, he sold antiques as his legit, going-straight job.

Whoa. Was he a drug dealer before or after you were born?
They overlapped.

How did that affect you?
In a profound way. Dad was a hard dude. He lived to get into fist fights, and he always had a buzz on. Most people had no idea. I can’t say, “I am this specific way because of that.” I just know you take that shit with you.

Did that feel scary?
The opposite: safe as hell. It was only after my parents divorced—and Dad was out of the house—that I felt fear for the first time. When I hit 14 or 15, he became a source of embarrassment. But now, I’m super-proud that I have some of Dad in me. If you have the gawky mannerisms I do—and if, like me, you’re a keener who’s always polite—people mistake those things for weakness. I channel my dad in those moments.

Which moments?
Every audition, and every time someone tried to muscle me. My father would’ve burned the whole city down before he let anybody fuck with me.

You’ve played your share of awkward sidekicks, as in *Almost Famous* and *Knocked Up*. How did you avoid being pigeonholed?
I’m reverent of the craft, but I’d be lying if I said I think about acting all the time. I think about stories I want to tell, and scenes I want to direct.

What’s your director superpower?
I have a vibe: I want filming to feel as close to a backyard game of cops and robbers as possible—like when you were a kid, making up stories with your friends, fully committed. Filmmaking is the greatest job in the world; it should never feel miserable.

Clint Eastwood directed you (playing a wannabe boxer) in *Million Dollar Baby*. What was that like?
I was scared shitless. Eastwood is the only guy I’ve worked with who my granddad would have been remotely impressed by. At that time, I had a masochistic approach to acting. I had to suffer to be good. I’d ask Clint after every take, “Was that all right?” and he’d say, “It was fine.” In my head, I’d hear, *“He hates me!”*

Well, did he?
Morgan Freeman saw me freaking out and said, “If he doesn’t say anything, it means he likes it.” I can’t overstate what an epiphany that was. As an actor, you’re always trying to get quote-unquote *there*. Well, *there* doesn’t actually exist. From that point on, I could show up on set and not torture myself.

We know from *Goon* that you’re a hockey fanatic. Tell me everything you love about it in one minute.
It’s the most beautiful and most brutal game in the world. You’ve got huge guys moving at very high speeds, yet it all comes down to millimetre shifts in the wrist. And the gap between observation, decision and execution is a second. It’s like watching a comic book come to life.

You also host *Highly Legal* (a podcast about marijuana) and *We’re All Gonna Die*, (*Even Jay Baruchel*), a docuseries about existential threats like climate change. Are these projects opportunities to expand your reach?
I’m in my Michael Palin travel-doc era. If, because I swore a bunch in *Goon*, or had a semen stain on my pants in *She’s Out of My League*, I can drive audiences toward stuff I care about, that’s a cool thing.

So legalized marijuana is a subject that’s dear to your heart?
Whatever gave you that impression? Yes. I’m normally a rule follower. In my younger days, I found myself consorting with characters I’d never have had anything to do with if I didn’t have to buy weed from them. So, when the clock struck 12:01 on October 17, 2018, I went onto the Ontario Cannabis Store’s website. By 12:02, I was checking out.

Let’s finish with a big question. What have you learned about people or yourself from all those films?
Not much is sacred in the 21st century. Sincere love between people—romantic, familial, platonic—is one sacred thing. The only other, in my heart of hearts, is the relationship between artist and audience. All I want is to fall head over heels in love with the movie I’m watching or the song I’m listening to. If I can create that for someone else, that’s a life worth living. I don’t hate-watch. What a silly waste of time. ■

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

SUN am
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Stockpile Canada's Drugs

The pandemic—and one very bad winter—have exposed long-standing gaps in Canada's pharma supply. We can't get caught off-guard again. ***By Shoo Lee***

LAST SUMMER, my colleagues and I published a paper in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, insisting that pharmaceutical security needed to become a national priority. Months later, we saw why: in the midst of a "tripledemic" of COVID, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, panicked parents scoured pharmacies for children's Tylenol and found only empty shelves. Sick adults couldn't get their hands on over-the-counter cold medicines. Out west, the antibiotic amoxicillin was scarce.

As Canadian health-care professionals know, this was an extreme example of an old issue. One quarter of all Canadian drugs (over-the-counter and otherwise) were running short well before the pandemic, but there's nothing quite like a global health crisis to expose a country's weak points. To make sure shortages like this don't keep happening, we need a plan—and the political will—to keep at least six months' worth of critical drugs stocked on home soil at all times.

Canada's fundamental problem, for a long time, has been one of foreign dependence. The world of pharmaceuticals is attached to a hugely complex supply chain, one that's easily disrupted by geopolitical problems (like wars), shipping issues (like high fuel costs) and, of course, viral outbreaks (like COVID-19). On top of that, the majority of the active pharmaceutical ingredients, or APIs, needed to make drugs are produced in India and China. And many brands are only supplied by

ILLUSTRATION BY PETE RYAN

one or two companies. One such drug is Clavulin, an oral antibiotic for children that was recently in short supply.

In the past decade, the percentage of Canada's drug spending allocated to imports rose from 74 to 93 per cent, making us especially vulnerable to supply cut-offs. As we saw with COVID vaccines, countries with their own production facilities will always prioritize getting treatments to their own citizens. If your drug-acquisition strategy relies heavily on imports, as ours does, you need mechanisms in place to protect yourself.

The good news is that Canada has run into this problem—and solved it—before. In the 1940s, most of our drugs were sourced from outside of the country. (For a while, we also paid some of the highest drug costs in the OECD.) To fix this issue, in 1969, the federal government amended the Patent Act to allow Canadian companies to manufacture patented drugs by paying royalties to brand-name pharmaceutical companies. This resulted in huge growth in Canada's own pharmaceutical industry. But with the rise of free-trade agreements, like NAFTA, we buckled under external pressure to reverse that policy. Our companies could no longer compete; many of them went bankrupt or were bought out by overseas firms. To this day, Apotex is the only remaining large manufacturer of generic drugs in Canada.

> **"If your drug-acquisition strategy relies heavily on imports, as Canada's does, you need mechanisms in place to protect yourself"**

The best short-term solution Canada has for its current drug-supply problem is one we can copy from our neighbours. At the outset of the pandemic, the World Health Organization called on all countries to create a list of essential medicines—one that would ensure citizen access to critical drugs. Down south, the Trump administration issued an executive order to the FDA to compile a list of 227 must-have medicines, like aspirin and morphine, as well as their proper dosage methods.

In Canada, we have no such list, aside from the 12 medicines declared critical by Health Canada during COVID, which include epinephrine and fentanyl. Drawing up our own list isn't exactly rocket science: Health Canada simply needs to convene a panel of experts—pharmacists, doctors and representatives from the various provincial ministries of health—to decide which drugs should make the cut. For the most part, running out of something like cold medicine is an inconvenience. But people with more serious illnesses, like cancer, can't afford to wait six months for a restock of oncology drugs. I'd also add things like anesthetics, epidurals, antibiotics and drugs used for diagnostic imaging to the list. Canadians and Americans have similar medical needs; we could very well use the FDA's template as a starting point.

Once we know which drugs to prioritize, we need a more efficient way of stockpiling them. Like us, the European Union was crippled by a surge in sickness last winter; they began drawing up its own stockpiling plans back in January. Canada already has its own National Emergency Strategic Stockpile, or NESS, which is managed by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It's available for the provinces and territories to dip into during emergencies. Unfortunately, it's also riddled with problems. Back in 2010, an audit revealed that many of the NESS's supplies were expired—some dating as far back as the 1960s. NESS was also short on much of the personal protective equipment we needed at the height of COVID. This cannot happen again.

A six-month stockpile of critical medicines should be readily available for distribution. To keep track of it, Health Canada (or some related federal department) needs to create a more rigorous internal inventory, one that's digitized and updated in real time with every replenishing shipment or change in drug quantity. Another idea is to store the medicines in warehouses owned by the drug manufacturers themselves. The downside of this is that, in order to pay for the extra space, the government may have to allow producers to increase their drug costs. (To me, this provision is worth the price—especially in a resource-rich country like Canada.) To ensure the stockpile is always full, the federal government could establish a Crown corporation to manufacture these essential drugs. In the event of a national shortage—which, sadly is certain to occur again—production can be ramped up to meet demand.

The long-term strategy is to create a thriving pharmaceutical industry at home. There are reasons to be hopeful: Moderna planted roots in Quebec back in 2020, with the eventual goal of producing 100 million mRNA vaccine doses every year. Last winter, Quebec's Mantra Pharma distributed its first domestic shipment of M-Amoxi Clav—a generic of Clavulin. And researchers at the Université de Montréal are pioneering new technologies that could streamline the output of APIs, allowing manufacturers to more efficiently scale up production when our drug supply runs too low. Some people will say that Canada is simply too small a market to compete internationally, but we've done it once before.

Canada again has some of the highest drug costs in the OECD, third behind the U.S. and Switzerland. We need to stop paying through our noses—and looking elsewhere—for medications that are essential to Canadians' livelihoods. Young children shouldn't be running fevers because we can't secure something as simple as children's Tylenol, and our solution can't be to order two million bottles to get parents to stop complaining. We can't wait for the next war—or pandemic-sized meltdown—to motivate us. We should always be prepared. ■

SHOO LEE *is professor emeritus at the University of Toronto and former pediatrician-in-chief at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. He was named to the Order of Canada in 2019.*

THE PROSPECT

YOUNG CANADIANS ABOUT TO BREAK BIG

The Stand-Up Gal

Comedian turned reluctant TikTok sensation ***Andrea Jin*** *puts a funny spin on what her peers feel—but don't say*

SOME MIGHT THINK Andrea Jin's trademark sweet-then-dark jokes about, say, China's one-child policy, veer into too-far territory, but 250,000 TikTok followers can't be wrong. *Mulan*, her grandparents—all of it is fodder for the Vancouver comedian, who has channelled her dry, yeah-I-said-it sensibility into online acclaim and a ticket to Los Angeles (where she now lives).

Now 27, Jin was just 10 when her family immigrated from China to Vancouver. After school, she received English lessons from *Family Guy* and Russell Peters's stand-up—stuff no kid should hear. "My parents didn't speak English either, so they couldn't tell," she says. She got hooked on performing during a five-minute set at a campus comedy event at Western University, where she studied business. Everyone was eating and doing homework, but Jin wasn't fazed. She quit school, took a job at a Vancouver steakhouse and gigged at small comedy clubs around the city—for free, at first. In 2019, Jin was a finalist in SiriusXM's Top Comic competition. Then she appeared at Just for Laughs in Montreal. "Things just snowballed."

Even as her career began to resemble those of her idols, Jin still didn't see herself in their shoes. "Those male powerhouses were great," Jin says, "but being an Asian girl, none of them had my perspective." That is until *Grandma's Girl*, a 2020 recording of Jin's most crowd-pleasing bits, including "Wax Me" and "Asians Are in Movies Now." Every single track was labelled "explicit" on Apple Music.

When gigs dried up during the pandemic, Jin's manager, who signed her after a New Faces showcase at Just for Laughs, suggested she post clips of *Grandma's Girl* online. Initially, Jin thought it was "cringe." But her riffs on the pitfalls of social media and gently rejecting her female friends—she's bisexual—have since earned Jin hundreds of thousands of fans, who flood her DMs with gratitude for making them feel seen. "I do this for selfish reasons—I didn't know it would affect others positively," she says, laughing, then uncharacteristically earnest. "It keeps me going."

Last spring, *Grandma's Girl* won a Juno for Comedy Album of the Year, and recently, Jin was hired to write for the Comedy Central series *Digman!* She's gone Hollywood insofar as she's already booked James Corden and has written a sitcom pilot (with plans to pitch), but she's still shocked when she—"just some Canadian!"—gets recognized on the street. It brings to mind one of Jin's favourite jokes, her long-time opener, where she asks the audience if it's okay that she's an immigrant. They seem to love it.

—Mira Miller

POP QUIZ

Future stand-up special title: "Something cool but not too try-hard. Maybe *Andrea Jin: Canadian, Chinese, Live*."

Dream venue: Madison Square Garden or Carnegie Hall

Favourite gag: "Nate Bargatze, an American comedian, tells a joke about how he once ordered iced coffee with milk, but the barista heard 'milk with ice' and gave him a cup of it. It's so simple and stupid that it's funny."

Juno storage: Back in Vancouver, polished daily by her grandma. "It feels disrespectful to bring it to America. I'm gonna keep it in the land of Chad Kroeger."

Homesick for: "Canada's cleaner, more colourful money"

PHOTOGRAPH BY **EMMA McINTYRE**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **CHRISTINA SPINA**

MACLEAN'S
ideas
SUMMIT
2023

FRESH IDEAS

Maclean's inaugural Ideas Summit gathered leaders and thinkers from across the country to discuss the Canada of today—and tomorrow

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The first-ever *Maclean's* Ideas Summit, inspired by the magazine's recent Year Ahead issue, featured discussions about Canada's future with brilliant thinkers at venues around Toronto. The three-day event—held in partnership with signature sponsor Uber Canada, as well as the UHN Foundation and Colliers Canada—included a live Q&A with environmentalist David Suzuki, a fireside chat with public-health expert Andrew Boozary and a panel of mini talks from industry leaders on innovation in health care, business, education and more.

For full event coverage, visit Macleans.ca/events

GREAT MINDS As part of the three-day summit, guests were invited to a mini-talk series at OCAD University. The evening began with networking and drinks, followed by speeches about the future of innovation from top thinkers including OCAD U president Ana Serrano; Stefan Raos, head of public affairs and partnerships at Moderna Canada (in action above); and entrepreneur Wes Hall.

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GREEN MACHINE The summit kicked off with a virtual webinar and live Q&A with David Suzuki, the world-renowned author and activist. He delivered a powerful call to action to fight climate change. “We don’t know enough to know if it’s too late, but it is very late,” he said. Suzuki also encouraged young adults to challenge old ways of thinking, reduce their carbon footprints and protect the air, water and soil in their communities.

HEALTH MATTERS The Toronto restaurant Luma hosted an evening of networking, drinks and a fireside chat with Andrew Boozary, executive director of population health and social medicine at the University Health Network (near right). Boozary discussed how the pandemic had widened existing health disparities faced by marginalized communities. Raj Kothari, chair of the UHN Foundation (further right), was also in attendance.

SALON VISIT An intimate salon dinner took place in the private room of the Toronto restaurant Vela, where summitgoers discussed the future of talent and immigration in Canada.

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The New POWER List

100 Canadians Shaping the Country in 2023

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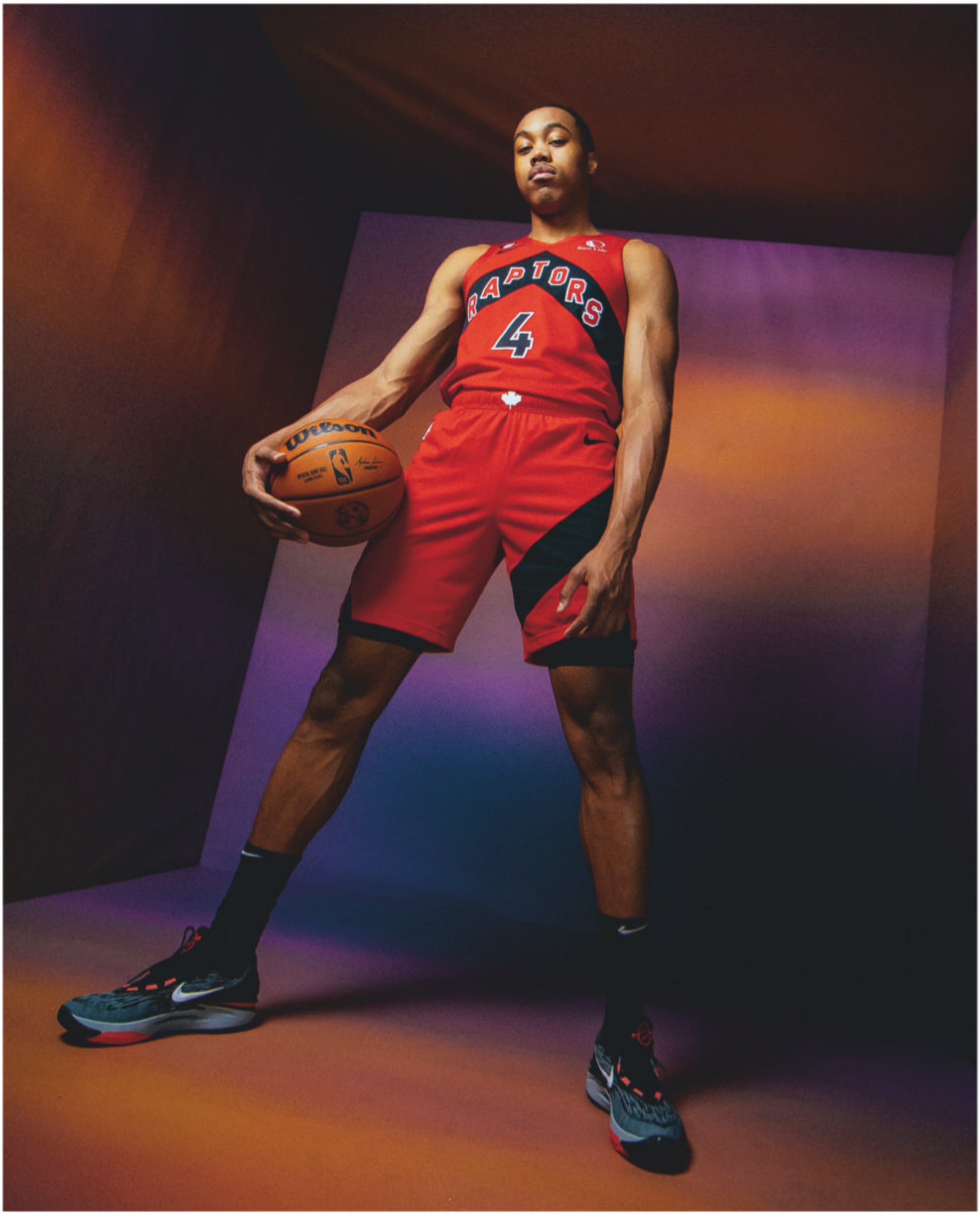
→ **After three pandemic-plagued years,** Canadians have emerged, squinting and disoriented, into a new world order. While we were baking sourdough in lockdown, artificial intelligence evolved from the stuff of movie magic into big business. Basketball and soccer closed in on hockey to join the ranks of Canada's national games. We finally began taking climate change seriously, churning out electric vehicles by the thousands and building skyscrapers out of renewable timber. And the coolest place to film a prestige TV show was suddenly…Alberta?

Commanding this weird, cool, occasionally scary new reality is a cohort of Canadians whose ideas and inventions are forging new industries and reinventing old ones—more than 100 of whom are catalogued in the following pages. There's Kris Collins, a former hairdresser who entertains some 48 million Gen Zers with her bite-sized TikTok sketches. Mindy Wight and Khelsilem of the Squamish Nation are in charge of a revolutionary $3-billion housing development in Vancouver. And twentysomething university dropout Alex Rodrigues is building a fleet of trucks that drive themselves. Some of the people on our list are already household names. The rest are about to be.

By *Rachel Heinrichs, Emily Landau, Jason McBride, Philip Preville, Mark Pupo, Courtney Shea, Mathew Silver, Katie Underwood and H.G. Watson*

THE POWER LIST › SPORTS STARS

The players and personalities putting Canada in the big leagues



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE RAPTORS/MLSE

01

Scottie Barnes

POINT FORWARD, TORONTO RAPTORS

THE RAPTORS' SURPRISE SUPERSTAR IS TAKING THE POST-KAWHI TEAM TO NEW HEIGHTS

It was 2021, and the Toronto Raptors were in a heap of trouble. The team had finished the season with a dismal record of 27-45, missing the playoffs for the first time in nearly a decade. The afterglow of their 2019 NBA championship was fading; it had been two years since megastar Kawhi Leonard went Hollywood, signing a contract with the Los Angeles Clippers. And though nobody knew it yet, Kyle Lowry, the team's tireless leader, would soon decamp for the Miami Heat. Fortunately, in the NBA, mediocrity is rewarded during the draft. In each year's player draft, the worst-performing teams pick first, a system designed to encourage parity in the league.

The Raptors ended up with the fourth pick—a chance to snap up a game-changing talent. There were plenty of excellent options, including Jalen Suggs, a super-smooth point guard who had just led his college team to the national final. But instead of selecting Suggs, the Raptors surprised everyone by picking a six-foot-eight, 225-pound point forward from Florida State and signing him to a four-year, $33-million contract. His name: Scottie Barnes. According to Raptors president Masai Ujiri, Barnes's pre-draft interview proved that he was simply obsessed with winning. "It's crazy when you interview a guy and he mentions 'winning' or 'win' 34 times," Ujiri has said. "This is what we wanted to bring to Toronto."

Barnes grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida. His mother, Kathalyn Wilkins, raised her four children by herself. As a kid, Barnes played recreational basketball at a Salvation Army gym against much older men, some in their 40s and 50s. He learned by watching their footwork, positioning, shooting and passing. Those games also helped develop Barnes's competitive edge. In pickup, the winning team gets to stay on the court, and without referees, things can get testy. Players argue. Fights break out. "But that's what makes you tough," Barnes has said.

The kid seemed to have it all: height, rebounding and scoring skills, a high basketball IQ. When a local youth coach named John Simpson saw Barnes holding his own against adults, he was gobsmacked. He believed Barnes was destined for greatness. Barnes soon moved in with Simpson and his family, and he played his final year of high school ball at Montverde Academy, a prominent prep program in Florida where many of the best young hoopers in the country go to hone their craft (its alumni include NBA stars like Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons). By then, he was a fixture of the USA youth program, bringing home three gold medals in international competition. When it came time to pick a college, Barnes stayed close to home and attended Florida State. At 18, he already had the makings of a defensive dynamo, with the size, speed and tenacity to guard any player on the court. Barnes once said that applying defensive pressure was his favourite thing to do—a revealing answer, in part because most young basketball prodigies are preoccupied with scoring points and uploading highlights to Instagram. Barnes had the makings of a great team player, someone who could help the Raptors rebound.

After joining the team, he became an instant fan favourite, playing with irrepressible joy, flashing that goofy, gap-toothed smile and joking with teammates. He dominated games early in the 2021-22 season, standing out for his relentless energy. He'd snatch rebounds and hurtle down the court in long bounding strides, stretching his body up to the basket and gliding effortlessly to the hoop. He was a quick, versatile defender, often tasked with guarding the opposing team's best player, like superstars LeBron James and Kevin Durant. After one game, Durant marvelled at Barnes's talent: "A lot of young guys in the league have that competitive fire, but he has something a little extra."

"IT'S CRAZY WHEN YOU INTERVIEW A GUY AND HE MENTIONS 'WINNING' 34 TIMES," SAYS MASAI UJIRI. "THIS IS WHAT WE WANTED TO BRING TO TORONTO."

Barnes was a workhorse, averaging 15.3 points, 7.5 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game. Most importantly, he helped the Raptors return to their winning ways, finishing the season with a record of 48-34—good enough for a playoff spot. The Raptors were back. Barnes was voted NBA Rookie of the Year, the third Raptor in history to receive the award, alongside legends Damon Stoudamire and Vince Carter. Lucrative sponsorships followed, from Subway, Axe body spray and Google phones. He even appeared alongside Jeff Goldblum in ads for the latest *Jurassic World* film. Barnes was officially the boyish face of the franchise, whose future today looks bright. They've gone through a lull in 2023, but Barnes has kept things consistent. Through the first half of his second season, he was averaging 16 points, seven rebounds and five assists, maintaining the totals from his rookie campaign. At just 21 years old, if Barnes continues to develop his game and evolve as a leader, he could end up being one of the best players in Raptors history.

—Mathew Silver

02

Alphonso Davies

WINGER, CANADA'S MEN'S SOCCER TEAM

FOR GIVING CANADA A MOMENT OF GLOBAL SOCCER GLORY

Prior to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the average Canadian didn't know much about Davies. Born in a refugee camp in Ghana, he settled as a child in Edmonton, where Davies developed a love for soccer. His career took him to the top league in Germany, even as he flew under the radar at home. But everything changed during Canada's World Cup match against Croatia. Under the blazing Qatari sun, Davies beat his defender and headed the ball into the net, scoring the first goal in World Cup history for Canada's men's team. It established Davies as a national superhero—in cleats, not skates. Currently a top player for German team Bayern Munich, Davies will be in the national spotlight again when Canada co-hosts the 2026 World Cup, where he'll do his best to create more magical moments.

03. Felix Auger-Aliassime

TENNIS PLAYER

He's a clay-court powerhouse

At the age of 15, when Auger-Aliassime was dominating competition at the youth level, tennis pundits started calling him a prodigy, destined to be one of the world's greatest players. Seven years later, he's made good on that potential. The stringy youngster from Quebec won four singles titles in 2022, earning $4.1 million in prize money. He knocked off a handful of top-ranked players, including Rafael Nadal, and ended the year ranked sixth in the world. (Milos Raonic was ranked number three at the height of his career.) But his crowning moment came at the Davis Cup, the most important team tournament on the tennis calendar. In the finals, with the cup on the line, Auger-Aliassime set his feet and boomed a forehand down the line, giving Canada the victory. This year, he'll look to take the next step in his career by winning a grand slam.

07. Masai Ujiri

PRESIDENT,
TORONTO RAPTORS

For making Toronto a true basketball town

Ujiri is easily one of the most valuable assets in the NBA, though he'll never set foot on the court. He's got an unimpeachable knack for finding overlooked talent, like the undrafted Fred VanVleet, and a reputation as a trend-setter, tapping players from his home continent of Africa to compile an intimidating roster of newcomers. His genius is no secret. For years, big franchises like the New York Knicks have been trying to lure Ujiri away from Toronto, tempting him with the spoils and prestige of running a franchise in a major basketball city. That's why, in 2021, the Raptors awarded Ujiri a contract worth $15 million a year, making their maestro one of the highest-paid executives in the league. The duration of the deal is top secret, but hopefully the Raptors were wise enough to lock Ujiri down for as long as possible.

Davies by Getty Images; Auger-Aliassime by Evaan Kheraj; Ujiri courtesy of the Raptors/MLSE

04. Christine Sinclair & Diana Matheson

SOCCER STARS AND ENTREPRENEURS

For launching a league of their own

Sinclair and Matheson are among the best Canadian soccer players ever: Sinclair just led Canada to Olympic gold in Tokyo, and Matheson has competed at three Olympics, earning two bronze medals. Now the pair are staring at another goal: launching an eight-team women's soccer league in Canada by 2025. It will be funded by team owners and corporate sponsors, costing $8 to $10 million per team through the first five seasons. Vancouver and Calgary have committed, and Air Canada and CIBC are on board as sponsors. Now, the pair need to fill six more slots, courting owners who can afford a $1-million franchise fee. They also need to find additional backers and convince Canadian talent abroad to come home. If their business acumen is impressive as their on-field performance, however, there should be no problem.

05. Peter Montopoli

COO CANADA, FIFA WORLD CUP

He's bringing the World Cup to Canada

Everyone knows it: the FIFA World Cup is coming in 2026, with games at BC Place in Vancouver and BMO Field in Toronto. Not as well known is how Montopoli made it happen. In 2018, as the general secretary of Canada Soccer, he worked with the U.S. and Mexico, securing a joint bid. Montopoli did a little of everything—liaising with the Canadian government, lobbying internationally, preparing materials for the bid, nailing down the campaign slogan (Unity, Certainty and Opportunity). In 2021, with the bid in the bag, FIFA hired him to oversee the Canadian arm of the tournament. It's a big job. Toronto expects to spend roughly $300 million on hosting, and Vancouver nearly as much. On the bright side, billions of people watch the World Cup, exposure that could be worth billions of dollars in tourism revenue for each city.

06. Marie-Philip Poulin

CAPTAIN, CANADA'S WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

For keeping Canada on top of the hockey podium

Poulin has developed a reputation for scoring big goals at the right moment, and 2022 was no different. Poulin won the North Star Award, given to Canada's top athlete, for captaining Canada to gold medals at the world championships and the Beijing Olympics, where she scored two goals in the final to knock off the U.S. The Olympic win was especially sweet. With NHL players unable to compete because of COVID concerns, Canada's men's team foundered, knocked out in the quarterfinals. But Poulin and the women's squad asserted Canada's on-ice dominance. Poulin's hockey savvy is in high demand: the Montreal Canadiens have brought her on as a player development consultant. She'll also continue working with the Professional Women's Hockey Players' Association to build a women's pro hockey league in North America.

08. Leylah Fernandez

TENNIS (AND BRANDING) PRO

She's turning her on-court talents into off-court riches

Following an astonishing rise to superstardom in the past few years, Fernandez is now ready to scale tennis's highest peaks. Yes, the 20-year-old from Montreal can rally and serve with the best of them, with a whopping forehand and don't-blink speed at the baseline. But her off-court branding and promotional savvy are equally valuable assets. Last year, Fernandez was the 10th-highest-paid female athlete in the world, earning $6.4 million. That total included $1.9 million from tournaments, including a quarter-final finish at the French Open last spring, and $4.5 million worth of endorsements from top-tier brands like Lululemon, Google and Gatorade, among others. This year, Fernandez will look to improve on her number-39 world ranking and max out her earning potential.

09. John Herdman

HEAD COACH, CANADA'S MEN'S SOCCER TEAM

For putting Canadian soccer on a world stage

In 2018, when the Canadian men's soccer team was seeking a head coach, they didn't need to look far. Herdman had spent much of the past decade reviving the Canadian women's team, leading them to two Olympic bronze medals. He turned out to be the right person for the men's job, too. Herdman led the squad to the 2022 World Cup, its first in 36 years, using a blend of tactical brilliance and guru-like motivation. At the tournament itself, things didn't go quite as planned, with Canada losing all three games. But there's reason for hope. Canada showed it could hang with the best teams in the world. And Herdman—who recently turned down offers to coach other national sides—will spend the next few years using his managerial mastery to prepare Team Canada for the 2026 World Cup, where they plan to make the most of their home-field advantage.

10. Hayley Wickenheiser

ASSISTANT GM, TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

She's pushing Canada's national game into the future

Wickenheiser seems to excel at anything she tries. The Hall of Famer won four Olympic golds and retired in 2017 as the greatest women's hockey player in history. Now she pulls a double shift as both a resident physician at Toronto Western Hospital and assistant GM for the Toronto Maple Leafs, working in player development. She also holds considerable sway in the wider hockey community. During the Hockey Canada scandal in 2022, Wickenheiser was among the voices calling to dismantle the organization's leadership. "Regardless of what happens in the boardrooms, it's the grassroots, it's the moms and dads, the volunteers, the Zambonis and cafeterias and the rink that keep hockey going," she said. Rumours even swirled that she was in consideration to be Hockey Canada's new leader—a testament to her clout and competence.

Sinclair, Matheson and Montopoli courtesy of Canada Soccer; Poulin by Getty Images; Fernandez by Martin Sidorjak; Herdman by Paul Bolasco; Wickenheiser by CP Images

THE POWER LIST › POLITICAL BACKROOMERS

The aides, advisers and campaign geniuses behind the big names

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL WILSON/CBC

01

Jenni Byrne

CEO, JENNI BYRNE + ASSOCIATES

POILIEVRE'S CHIEF ADVISER KNOWS HOW CANADIANS THINK—AND HOW THEY VOTE

Pierre Poilievre's 2022 Conservative Party leadership campaign sold more than 300,000 party memberships. It drew thousands of supporters at rallies in Edmonton and Calgary and more than a thousand to events in Vancouver, Windsor, Ottawa and elsewhere. When the votes and points were tallied, Poilievre wiped the floor with his opponents, cruising to victory with nearly 70 per cent support.

These are wildly impressive figures for a leadership campaign, and they culminated in an impossible feat: uniting the bag of angry cats that is the Conservative Party of Canada, whose factions had spent the seven previous years mercilessly mauling each other. It was a campaign perfectly tailored to Poilievre's strengths as an orator and a rabble-rouser. And it has put his campaign manager Jenni Byrne back atop the political hierarchy of backroom Ottawa.

You may remember Byrne as the campaign manager who, back in 2011, delivered to Stephen Harper's Conservative party its long-desired holy grail: a majority government. You more likely remember Byrne as the campaign manager who, four years later, led Harper's Conservatives to a crushing defeat at the hands of Trudeau's Liberals. The party had grown fat and listless, and Trudeau had emerged as a political juggernaut. Nevertheless, a long procession of detractors spent months laying blame for the loss on Byrne's shoulders and attempting to drum her out of the party. In politics, your adversaries are on the outside but your enemies usually lie within.

Her critics underestimated her. Modern campaigns are no longer about persuading swing voters to like you. They are about motivating your supporters to turn out in larger numbers than your opponents. And no one understands the Conservative base—what they think, how they behave and what will get them out to the polls—better than Byrne. As one senior Conservative says, "Jenni *is* the base."

She is also a measure of generational change in that base. The Bill Davis Red Tories and the Mulroney-era coalitionites are extinct. Byrne, the new prototypical Conservative, is cast from a different mould. Born and raised in Fenelon Falls, Ontario (population 2,500), Byrne joined Preston Manning's Reform Party in 1997. She attended Georgian College and the University of Ottawa but graduated from neither. On more than one occasion, she has travelled vast distances with girlfriends to see Meat Loaf live in concert. She's not just a Habs fan; she's a Habs fan who enjoys trolling Leafs fans on Twitter. Byrne used to drive a custom Ford Mustang; now she drives a Bronco Sport. Yet when she lived in Ottawa, she settled downtown and went long stretches without owning a car at all, preferring instead to walk to work—behaviour that's normally considered progressively urbane.

She and Poilievre were romantically involved for a brief time, more than a decade ago, but there are obviously no hard feelings between them. Everyone who knows Byrne describes her as fiercely loyal, her ferocity never more evident than when she has been crossed. The people who get on her bad side tend to stay there. When she runs a campaign, she commands whatever room she's in: she listens to those around the table but is unafraid to end the discussion, make a decision and move on. Even with strangers, Byrne's view of politics is all about relationships. She knows how to read and understand polling data but sees it for what it is: a view from 30,000 feet, far too abstract. The reams of voter data culled from social media, similarly, are simultaneously intimate yet impersonal. For Byrne, the picture is incomplete without the view at ground level.

Despite the time pressures of managing a national campaign, she'll make sure to stop in multiple ridings for an evening of door-to-door canvassing. It's a task most politicians secretly despise, but Byrne has a passion for it. She brings no head-office entourage in tow and won't accept any VIP treatment from the local candidate. She visits every home assigned to her, and she's not the type to argue policy on the doorstep. She asks questions, she listens carefully and she says thank you.

CAMPAIGNS ARE NO LONGER ABOUT PERSUADING SWING VOTERS TO LIKE YOU. THEY ARE ABOUT MOTIVATING YOUR SUPPORTERS TO TURN OUT IN LARGER NUMBERS.

All the while, she's busy integrating all those conversations, along with polling and fundraising data and social media comments, into the sophisticated political algorithm inside her mind. This used to be called having your finger on the voters' pulse, but that's too clinical a phrase. Byrne looks voters in the eye. It's a different kind of connection, one that's harder to forsake.

And then she transplants that connection into the candidate for whom she works. With Harper, the graft didn't always take, but Poilievre's style is better suited to hers. Whatever role she ends up playing on his campaign team (manager? chair?), she'll guide him deftly through controversy, calibrating responses that appeal to party stalwarts, and she'll herd them to the polls like no one else can. Conservative fortunes are on the rise, and no one wants to be on Jenni Byrne's bad side right now.

—Philip Preville

02

Katie Telford

CHIEF OF STAFF, PMO

FOR KEEPING TRUDEAU ON TRACK—AND IN OFFICE

Telford is the most powerful staffer in Ottawa, with nearly eight years under her belt as Justin Trudeau's top lieutenant and campaign wizard. During that time, she's come up against—and easily quashed—such milquetoast opponents as Andrew Scheer and Erin O'Toole. Now she's facing off against a more potent adversary in the form of Pierre Poilievre and his dynamo adviser Jenni Byrne. So far, Telford's coming out on top: in December, her ground game won out against Byrne's in the critical Mississauga–Lakeshore by-election, where Charles Sousa held on to the seat for the Liberals. With a possible election in mind, she started this year by shuffling top parliamentary aides, bringing in Sean Mullin, an economic adviser, and Alana Kiteley, a key staffer on the NDP-Liberal supply-and-confidence file—a deal that Telford was instrumental in striking last year.

03. Leslie Church

CHIEF OF STAFF, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

She's the deputy's deputy

If Deputy PM Chrystia Freeland is Trudeau's second-in-command, then Church is Freeland's. After a stint as head of communications and public affairs for Google Canada, she joined the public service in 2015, where she rose through the chief-of-staff ranks, running the show for ministers Mélanie Joly, Maryam Monsef and Anita Anand. She joined Freeland's office in 2020 as director of policy, then got the chief-of-staff job after the 2021 election. Church leads Freeland's team of 30 aides and advisers, championing Freeland's priorities (such as climate change and the war in Ukraine), developing the federal budget and working with private and public stakeholders to make progress on important agenda items. Church's parents were both air-traffic controllers, and she sees her job as similar to theirs: calmly landing planes while keeping her eye on what lies ahead.

07. Nick Kouvalis

PRINCIPAL, CAMPAIGN RESEARCH

He's the puppet master behind Ontario's elections

Ontario's most notorious pollster has been behind the scenes of every important election in the province for the past decade. In 2010, he successfully ushered Rob Ford into the Toronto mayor's office, then did the same for John Tory four years later. He returned to Ford Nation to help DoFo land a second majority provincial government in 2022, gaining 16 seats from his previous win. Kouvalis's firm, Campaign Research, gathered reams of data and came away with a mantra of "get it done," targeting federal Liberal voters who were sick of pandemic-induced delays. In turn, Ford promised a slew of new jobs and infrastructure. Kouvalis's research also supported a blitz of ads on social media and, most memorably, on Waze, hoping to catch voters stuck in traffic and promise a relief from gridlock.

Telford by Adam Scotti; Church by Dave Chan; Kouvalis courtesy of the subject

04. Jeff Ballingall

FOUNDER, MOBILIZE MEDIA

For memeing his way to the top

If you want to attack the Trudeau government, Jeff Ballingall is your man. The Conservative strategist is the guy behind the social media accounts Ontario Proud and Canada Proud, both of which have collected hundreds of thousands of followers for their super-clicky, brazenly snarky content. Ballingall and his team specialize in memes that boil down anti-Liberal sentiment to the basics; recently those included a Valentine stating "I Love You As Much As I Hate Trudeau" and a mug labelled "Trudeau's tears" (it's available for purchase). Ballingall's strategy firm, Mobilize Media, uses this viral-ready content—plus heaps of data-driven marketing—to steer Conservative campaigns: he helped Erin O'Toole win the Conservative leadership in 2020, and more recently, Pierre Poilievre's team has retained the firm to get their candidate into the PMO. Their bread and butter, Ballingall has said, are female voters over 55.

05. Anne McGrath

NATIONAL DIRECTOR, NDP

For pulling off the deal of the decade

Long-time NDP adviser Anne McGrath and Justin Trudeau's chief-of-staff Katie Telford have been brokering deals for some 15 years, beginning in 2008 with a proposed Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition aimed at taking down Stephen Harper. Along the way, the two women have become close friends and closer co-conspirators. Last year, McGrath teamed up with Telford again to choreograph the supply-and-confidence agreement that would keep the Liberals in power through 2025. (Discussions reportedly began in 2021, then kicked off again when Trudeau called Jagmeet Singh in early 2022 to congratulate him on the birth of his daughter.) McGrath scored several big wins out of the deal, such as dental subsidies for kids and renters' rebates. Next up: ensuring the Libs hold up their side of the bargain, including a national pharmacare bill by the end of this year and a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights.

06. Martin Koskinen

CHIEF OF STAFF, QUEBEC PREMIER FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

He's the CAQ's smooth secret weapon

In 2018, François Legault, leader of the Coalition Avenir Québec, became premier of Quebec, ending some 50 years of tug-of-war between the Parti Québécois and the Liberals. Behind the loudmouth Legault is the calm, decidedly low-key Martin Koskinen—more than Legault's chief adviser, Koskinen is the man the premier calls his "alter ego." Koskinen was also one of the main architects of the CAQ in 2011, abandoning his job running an online auction house to lead merger negotiations with the Action démocratique du Quebec. So far, their team is unbeatable: at last year's election, Legault increased the CAQ's majority, riding on a populist wave that included such policies as a ban on religious symbols in the public service, a vehement anti-immigration agenda and a proposed (but ultimately cancelled) tax on unvaccinated Quebecers.

08. Matt Smith

CHIEF OF STAFF, B.C. PREMIER DAVID EBY

He's preparing B.C.'s premier for the fight of his life

Last year, long-time B.C. premier John Horgan stepped down following a cancer diagnosis. His successor, the NDP candidate and former B.C. attorney general David Eby—who won by default after his opponent was disqualified—will see out the rest of Horgan's term through 2024. After that, he's determined to win on his own merits, and Matt Smith is just the guy to help him do it. Smith is the former head of the polling firm Stratcom and a campaign heavy-hitter who worked on races for both Jack Layton and Rachel Notley. More recently, he helped Eby clinch the provincial leadership race and now serves as the premier's chief of staff. Their flagship issues: addressing housing affordability; expanding public health care and fightinging the emerging two-tiered system; and improving public safety.

09. Steve Outhouse

CAMPAIGN MANAGER, UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY

For winning Alberta's heartland

Last year, following Jason Kenney's resignation, Danielle Smith became leader of the United Conservative Party and, by default, the premier of Alberta. She'll have to fight to hold on to that job, with an election scheduled for May and a tight race ahead against NDP Leader Rachel Notley. One path to victory is by holding on to—and expanding—her social-conservative base, and she's tapped Steve Outhouse to help her do that. As a former campaign manager for leadership candidate Leslyn Lewis, Outhouse lost two elections. What he gained was a shrewd understanding of the social-conservative voter. As for his work with Smith, Outhouse tweeted, "When you run national campaigns spanning the entire country, you can't help but develop an affinity for our Conservative heartland."

10. John Brodhead

DIRECTOR OF POLICY, PMO

For pushing Trudeau's agenda ahead

Brodhead worked as an adviser for Dalton McGuinty and ex–infrastructure minister Amarjeet Sohi before leaving Ottawa to work for the much-hyped and eventually doomed Sidewalk Labs project on the Toronto waterfront. After that project went kablooey, Trudeau hired him in 2021. He's one of the PM's chief staffers, and leads a team of 14 policy advisers, who liaise with the cabinet offices to ensure priority agenda items are moving forward, and on policy matters. After several years of putting out fires—COVID, the Freedom Convoy—Trudeau and Brodhead will likely be looking toward proactive policy this year. Among those initiatives: the massive $196-billion health funding deals between the feds and the provincial governments, creating more housing supply and keeping the promises made to the NDP as part of their fragile alliance.

Ballingall and McGrath courtesy of the subjects; Koskinen by Émilie Nadeau; Smith by Kellan Higgins; Outhouse by Mark Weir; Brodhead by CP Images

THE POWER LIST › AI TRAILBLAZERS

The innovators and iconoclasts placing Canada at the forefront of artificial intelligence

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAYCE CLIFFORD

01

Alex Rodrigues

CEO, EMBARK

THIS ALBERTA WHIZ KID IS PUTTING SELF-DRIVING TRUCKS ON AMERICA'S HIGHWAYS

Trucking is big business. In Canada alone, the industry generates nearly $70 billion in annual revenue and employs more than 200,000 people. In the U.S., nearly 3.5 million people make a living behind the wheel of a truck, each driving, on average, more than 160,000 kilometres per year and collectively consuming 54 billion gallons of gas.

All those kilometres logged, and all that fuel burned, take a serious toll on drivers and the environment. Each time a truck stops, fuel costs rise, especially if truckers then drive faster to make up for lost time. Moreover, the trucking industry is at the mercy of its operators' needs for sleep, food and bathroom breaks.

Take drivers out of the equation and those problems vanish: trucks run faster and cleaner. That's why the industry is investing millions in AI-powered autonomous driving software. One of the leaders in this fast-emerging area is San Francisco–based Embark, whose head honcho is Alex Rodrigues, a 27-year-old University of Waterloo dropout. Rodrigues's obsession with tech goes back to childhood. At his Calgary high school, he joined a competitive robotics team that built machines able to perform simple tasks like throwing basketballs and frisbees. Much to his parents' chagrin, he turned their living room into a robotics training ground, moving all the furniture out of the way to create more space to test his creations.

In 2013, Rodrigues enrolled at the University of Waterloo, known for its world-class robotics programs. There, he met Brandon Moak and Michael Skupien. The trio desperately wanted to get jobs with a self-driving car company, and they figured that one way to stand out was to build their own autonomous vehicle. One summer, they set to work modifying a golf cart they dubbed Marvin, which set their parents back about US$1,800.

Rodrigues and his team took a pragmatic approach to the build, deploying a simplified version of technologies already deployed by Google and Uber. Using the robot machine shop where Rodrigues worked in high school, they installed motion-detecting lasers and a GPS that steered Marvin along a predetermined route. The golf cart was up and running in four months. In August of 2015, the University of Waterloo's president at the time, Feridun Hamdullahpur, took a spin in it with Rodrigues, claiming the honour of becoming the first passenger to ride in a fully autonomous vehicle on a Canadian road.

After that success, the team applied to Y Combinator, a prestigious technology startup accelerator. Their original plan was to market self-driving golf carts to retirement communities, airports and theme parks, where they'd be useful for people not able to walk long distances. When they got in, they all dropped out of university and moved to San Francisco. (Skupien left the company in 2017.)

It turned out there wasn't a huge market for self-driving golf carts. The trucking industry, however, was long overdue for a more efficient way of doing business. The team pivoted, applying their autonomous driving technology to commercial trucks.

Embark doesn't make its own vehicles. Instead it integrates its software into existing ones, installing sensors and a computer that communicates with the brakes, steering and even HVAC. The software first "learns" to drive in simulated environments. Then it's installed in trucks and taken for test drives to analyze real-time camera data about road conditions, routes and obstacles. The company tests the AI in challenging driving situations—including, last year, a slippery and snowy Montana winter—and human engineers instruct the truck on how to react should the situation arise again. Trips can range up to 5,000 kilometres, with the company's growing network of cross-country transfer points serving as maintenance, refuelling and cargo transfer sites.

RODRIGUES'S OBSESSION WITH TECH GOES BACK TO CHILDHOOD, WHEN HE MOVED FURNITURE TO TURN HIS PARENTS' LIVING ROOM INTO A ROBOTICS TRAINING GROUND

By 2021, Embark had raised over US$317 million, including investments from trucking company Knight-Swift Transportation and the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board. The company went public that year, with an IPO value of more than US$5 billion. At 26, Rodrigues became one of the youngest-ever CEOs of a publicly traded company.

The recent crash in tech stocks dramatically lowered the company's valuation, but Embark remains a leader in autonomous trucking—which, thanks to simple and straightforward routes, is likely to be the first industry to truly be disrupted by self-driving vehicles. Embark's tech is already on the road in the U.S. for clients including DHL, Anheuser-Busch InBev, HP and Knight-Swift, driving in the U.S. sunbelt, where trucks don't have to contend with ice and snow.

An operator still rides in the cab, of course, in case anything goes awry. But the tech is advancing fast. Embark-equipped trucks can now interact with emergency services, such as pulling over for a police stop. Soon, Rodrigues hopes, the trucks will run entirely solo.

—H.G. Watson

02

Ivan Zhang, Aidan Gomez & Nick Frosst

FOUNDERS, COHERE

FOR CREATING A SMARTER, FRIENDLIER CHATBOT

When it launched last November, OpenAI's ChatGPT made chatbots the hottest topic in tech. And one of the buzziest companies in the space today is Cohere, founded in 2019 by three former University of Toronto students: Ivan Zhang, Aidan Gomez and Nick Frosst. The trio are pioneers in natural language processing, in which computers analyze vast amounts of human language and learn to organize the information to simulate logical thought. They fed billions of web pages, including discussion boards like Reddit, to a deep-learning model known as an advanced transformer. The resulting software now powers business applications that write Instagram captions, sort data and perform countless other tasks. In 2022, they secured US$125 million in Series B funding.

03. Jamie King

FOUNDER & CEO, VERAFIN

For making it tougher to pull off financial crimes

Canada's hottest billion-dollar company isn't based in Toronto or Vancouver, but in St. John's. When Jamie King co-founded Verafin with Raymond Pretty and Brendan Brothers in 2003, it was a small startup focused on detecting financial fraud and money laundering. Verafin made its name by expanding its security services to credit unions across Canada, eventually breaking into the United States. It analyzes large amounts of data, looking for changes or irregularities that could indicate financial crimes, such as fraudulent cheques or money laundering. In 2020, Verafin was acquired by Nasdaq for US$2.75 billion, though its head office remains in Newfoundland. These days, King is with Nasdaq full time: in 2022, he was promoted to the role of executive vice-president overseeing financial crime.

07. Geordie Rose

CEO, SANCTUARY

He's getting robots to do our dirty work

The words "artificial intelligence" often conjure up images of fictional androids, like *Star Wars*' C-3PO and *Star Trek*'s Data. Geordie Rose is one of the few people on Earth who might be able to make sci-fi robots, or something like them, at least, into reality. Sanctuary, the company he co-founded in 2018, wants to understand the human mind well enough to build a machine that can take over dirty, dangerous jobs, including the most treacherous tasks in nuclear plants, mines or military operations. Then there are jobs that don't exist yet, such as those that will be needed in space exploration. Rose's project raised over $75 million early in 2022 and received $30 million more from the federal government's Strategic Innovation Fund. He's also getting help from bright lights in Canada's science community, such as astronaut Chris Hadfield, who sits on Sanctuary's advisory board.

Zhang, Gomez, Frosst, King and Rose courtesy of the subjects

04. Geoffrey Hinton & Yoshua Bengio

CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER, VECTOR INSTITUTE; SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, MILA

For helping make Canada a global hub for AI research

The so-called godfathers of AI won the 2018 Turing Award for their research into neural networks, the brain-mimicking technology that fuels most current applications of artificial intelligence, including Apple's Siri, Google's search engine and most facial-recognition software. They're also largely responsible for the burst of AI startups in Canada: Hinton is chief scientist at the Vector Institute in Toronto, where he's fostered firms including natural-language processing firm Cohere and Deep Genomics, which uses AI to find treatments for genetic diseases. Bengio is Hinton's counterpart at Montreal's Mila, where he's supported AI companies such as Korbit, which aims to develop AI-powered virtual teachers.

05. Christian Weedbrook

CEO, XANADU

He's bringing quantum computing to the masses

Christian Weedbrook is developing a computer that may one day make your MacBook look as outdated as an abacus. The founder of Xanadu is working on a commercially viable quantum computer, which can harness the power of subatomic particles to perform otherwise impossibly complex, or impossibly time-consuming, computing feats. Major industry players, including Google and Microsoft, are in the same quantum-computing race, but Weedbrook is well-positioned. He's earned a major vote of confidence from the federal government, which this year announced $40 million in funding for his company through the Strategic Innovation Fund. That boosted the company's already hefty valuation to US$900 million—and brought our quantum future closer than ever.

06. Raquel Urtasun

CEO, WAABI

She's training real vehicles in a virtual world

Raquel Urtasun, a computer science professor at the University of Toronto, wants to take autonomous cars out of our fantasies and onto our streets. She parlayed her prior job experience as chief scientist and head of research at Uber's self-driving division into founding Waabi in 2021. Its Waabi Driver software is trained on a closed-loop simulator that exposes the AI to an enormous number of hypothetical situations, which would take millions of hours to experience in the real world. So far, Waabi has installed its software on vehicles manufactured by partners. Last fall, it unveiled its first autonomous freight trucks, which will be deployed for testing and data collecting. Big players are taking notice. In January, Volvo's venture capital arm announced it would sign on as a strategic investor.

08. Pablo Molina & Faizan Sheikh

CEO & CTO, AVIDBOTS

They're putting robots to work in a mall near you

The co-founders of Avidbots originally wanted to build a machine that would shovel snow. Instead, Faizan Sheikh and Pablo Molina moved on to tackle a different annoying task: mopping the floor. Their autonomous industrial robot Neo 2 can map environments and learn to clean differently on different days, depending on schedules and workspaces. Already, you can find more than 1,000 of their robots at work in airports, malls and factories around the world, helping to alleviate labour shortages and ensuring human workers can focus on serving customers, making products and other high-value tasks. If you haven't seen one of their bots yet, you probably will soon: in the fall of 2022, Avidbots closed a US$70-million Series C funding round to expand its global reach.

09. Julien Billot

CEO, SCALE AI

For funding an AI-powered supply chain

As we've recently learned, snarls in supply chains can have far-reaching effects. AI has the potential to head off those problems, optimizing how goods are manufactured, warehoused and shipped around the world. Julien Billot is CEO of Scale AI, Canada's artificial-intelligence supercluster, a constellation of companies devoted to using the technology to make global supply chains more efficient and more resilient against disruptions. To date, Scale AI has invested more than $400 million from the government and private sector into efforts including intelligent forecasting to help pharmaceutical companies better prepare inventory; AI systems to improve route planning for shippers; virtual recreations of warehouses and factories to help managers get a better handle on operations, and the Galileo Project, a tool that predicts labour needs in ports.

10. Joelle Pineau

CO-MANAGING DIRECTOR OF AI RESEARCH, META

She's preparing AI for the messy ambiguity of real life

Meta, Facebook's parent company, is betting big on artificial intelligence to build its metaverse, in which users will interact with one another in a parallel online reality. (It's also betting big on AI boosting its ad revenue.) And you can find Joelle Pineau, one of Meta's top researchers, in Montreal. The McGill professor is the co-managing director at Meta AI Research. Her studies involve improving how artificial intelligence responds to uncertainty—in other words, can it deal with situations that don't have clear yes-or-no answers, or when it doesn't know all the variables? The better the artificial intelligence performs in those scenarios, the better it can function in real life. It's crucial research that will underpin much of Meta's development, and Pineau is at the forefront.

Hinton by Emma Hinton, Bengio by Camille Gladu Drouin; Weedbrook courtesy of Collision Conference; Pineau by Kimberly M. Wang; Urtasun, Sheikh, Molina and Billot, courtesy of the subjects

THE POWER LIST › REAL ESTATE REFORMERS

You've heard the phrase "build back better." These Canadians are getting it done.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GRANT HARDER

01

Mindy Wight and Khelsilem

CEO, NCH'ḴAY̓ DEVELOPMENT CORP;
CHAIRPERSON, SQUAMISH NATION COUNCIL

FOR PAIRING REAL ESTATE WITH RECONCILIATION

Last fall, Squamish First Nation broke ground on Sen̓áḵw, a massive, years-in-the-making housing development at the south end of Vancouver's Burrard Bridge, on 10-plus acres of Squamish land. The project represented the largest economic partnership between a First Nation and the federal government in history, with the feds providing a $1.4-billion CMHC loan—also the largest ever. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Housing Minister Ahmed Hussen were both at the ceremony, of course, but they were accompanied by two local officials: Khelsilem, chairperson of the Squamish Nation Council and, off-camera, Mindy Wight, the CEO of Nch´ḵay̓, the Nation's business development arm. If Trudeau and Hussen embody the economic clout of the Canadian government, Khelsilem and Wight, young and ambitious, are poised to endow the Squamish people with unprecedented wealth and influence. They represent the new faces of Indigenous power.

The duo have been making political and economic waves for years. In 2017, at 29, Khelsilem was the youngest councillor to be elected to the Squamish Nation Council and appointed as one of two official spokespeople. Openly queer, and as comfortable in a voguing class as he is at a news conference, he quickly became renowned for his incisive anti-pipeline and housing activism and his strenuous efforts to preserve the Squamish language. Wight, who's 41, grew up off-reserve in Prince George and trained as a chartered accountant. As a partner at MNP for almost five years, she ran the accounting firm's national Indigenous tax services, working on governance and structuring with communities across the country. Wight wanted to give back to her own nation, so she joined Nch´ḵay̓'s board in 2019, then became CFO in 2021 and permanent CEO last fall. Under her canny leadership, Nch´ḵay̓'s executive team brought on Westbank—the company behind Vancouver House and Toronto's Mirvish Village—as a development partner on Sen̓áḵw. Last year, Wight tapped former B.C. Housing CEO Shayne Ramsay to help expand the organization's real estate portfolio.

Nch´ḵay̓ has already bankrolled several successful businesses across the Lower Mainland: a pair of marinas, an RV park and a gas bar. Sen̓áḵw, though, is on another level of complexity, size and potential political transformation. When complete, it will include 11 rental apartment towers (housing up to 10,000 people), plus a new public transit station, childcare space, thousands of bike parking spots, 50,000 square feet of park and recreation facilities and—vital for a region in agonizing need of affordable housing—1,200 units below market rates. Squamish Nation members and businesses will be given priority.

Because Sen̓áḵw is being built on reserve land, it's also legally free from the regulations and permits required of other developers; it will be bigger, and far denser, than most other housing complexes in the city centre. The entire project is estimated to cost $3 billion, and Westbank will split all future revenue with the Squamish Nation, which hopes to make between $8 billion and $10 billion over the project's lifespan. Much of that money has been earmarked to provide secure, affordable housing and other social services for Nation members in other parts of the province.

For Khelsilem, Wight and other members of the Squamish Nation, Sen̓áḵw represents a new future—one in which reconciliation is as much about genuine financial reparations as it is about moral reckoning. Centuries ago, this wedge of waterfront land was a Squamish summer village and trading hot spot, its waters rich with fish and its red-cedar forests patrolled by elk. When Vancouver was founded in the late 19th century, however, the territory was reduced to a reserve—and then even that was taken away. Provincial government officials burned the village in 1913, and families were banished to neighbouring nations. In 2003, after decades of court battles, the Federal Court of Canada finally returned a small portion of that land, upon which Sen̓áḵw is now being built. The fish and elk are long gone, but the land itself has become—thanks to Vancouver's overheated housing market—almost priceless. And thanks in part to Khelsilem and Wight, the Squamish people will be able to return to live and work where their ancestors once did.

> *KHELSILEM AND WIGHT, YOUNG AND AMBITIOUS, ARE POISED TO ENDOW THE SQUAMISH PEOPLE WITH UNPRECEDENTED WEALTH AND INFLUENCE*

Sen̓áḵw is a homecoming—and it's just the beginning. Other First Nations are sitting on goldmines, too. In 2014, Squamish Nation, Musqueam Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation signed an agreement to co-operate on land acquisitions and partnerships. Their for-profit real estate arm, MST Development, now owns six properties in the Metro Vancouver area, totalling 160 acres and worth $5 billion. Much of this land is already under development, promising yet more affordable housing, new transit and even a proposed film studio. Sen̓áḵw might look very different than it did before settlers took over, but soon enough, the city around it might look very much like Sen̓áḵw.

—Jason McBride

02

Stephen Sidwell

CEO, NEXII BUILDING SOLUTIONS

HE'S BUILDING AN EMPIRE (FROM A LOW-CARBON CONCRETE DUPE)

From the vegan meat substitute Gardein to the healthy fast-casual restaurant chain Lyfe Kitchen, serial entrepreneur Stephen Sidwell has long had his finger in various planet-protecting pies. In 2019, he brought that expertise to construction: he teamed up with Saskatchewan-based brothers Michael and Ben Dombowsky, inventors of Nexiite, a proprietary sand-and-water-based, low-carbon alternative to concrete. Last year, their company was valued at $2 billion, and Nexiite panels were used to construct Marriott hotels, Scotiabank branches and even homes in fire-ravaged Lytton, British Columbia. Gregor Robertson, a former Vancouver mayor, serves as VP of strategy and partnerships, and even actor Michael Keaton is a fan; he's partnered with Nexii to bring one of their plants to his hometown of Pittsburgh. Holy sustainability, Batman!

03. Robert Niven

FOUNDER & CEO, CARBONCURE

His carbon-capture company has impressed Bezos and Gates

Since 2012, the Halifax firm CarbonCure has set its emissions-cutting sights on the cement industry, which produces about eight per cent (and rising) of the world's greenhouse gases. Here's how CarbonCure works: the company's ingenious technology captures carbon dioxide from a variety of industrial sources, then injects it into fresh concrete, forever trapping the carbon—and simultaneously improving the concrete's strength. Under the leadership of founder and CEO Robert Niven, CarbonCure has received investment from Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos and, so far, has prevented almost 250,000 metric tonnes of CO_2 from entering the atmosphere. (For context, an average gas-fuelled car emits about five metric tonnes yearly.) By 2030, Niven and Co. hope to reduce those emissions by 500 million tonnes on an annual basis.

07. Carol Phillips

PARTNER, MORIYAMA & TESHIMA ARCHITECTS

For imagining bigger, better Canadian buildings

As far as the Canadian construction industry is concerned, mass timber has been the greatest, greenest thing going for years now. One project in particular promises to be the biggest and most Canadian: Limberlost Place, a startlingly ambitious 10-storey building at George Brown College in Toronto's east end. Scheduled to open in 2025, Limberlost will be the largest mass-timber structure in the country, its wood sourced from northern Quebec and its designers all based in Ontario. Architect Carol Phillips, of Moriyama & Teshima, is the partner in charge of the project, bringing to it the groundbreaking design techniques and keen aesthetic eye she's displayed at the award-winning University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre and the new Parliament Hill Visitor Welcome Centre in the nation's capital.

Sidwell, Phillips and Niven courtesy of the subjects

04. Cecilia Williams

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT & CFO, ALLIED PROPERTIES

For developing Canada's urban epicentres

Earlier this year, Allied Properties' founder and CEO, Michael Emory, stepped aside and long-time CFO Cecilia Williams took over. She has her work cut out for her. High interest rates and the shift to hybrid work have been hard on the REIT, whose countrywide portfolio includes hundreds of low-rise historic buildings lovingly converted into prime office space. A planned move to sell off the company's three Toronto data centres will replenish its coffers, however, and Allied's power to shape the urban core of Canada's major cities remains unmatched. The Well, a massive mixed-use Toronto development Allied co-owns with RioCan, is now open and bustling. And in 2022, the company acquired six new commercial properties, one of which is an office tower on Vancouver's West Georgia Street, the largest real estate deal in the city's downtown that year.

05. Alan Greenberg

CO-FOUNDER, GREENSOIL INVESTMENTS

He's funding real estate's green future

Alan Greenberg is Toronto real estate royalty, with almost 30 years under his belt at the family business. (You may know the condo and rental-apartment developer the Minto Group.) At Minto, Greenberg formed the Minto Green Team, which is focused on making the company more energy-efficient and all-around eco-friendly. After retiring at 50, Greenberg carried that same sustainability-boosting impulse into his next venture: Greensoil Investments, a venture capital firm that's devoted $100 million to bankrolling cutting-edge, zero-carbon real estate and agricultural projects across North America—and as far afield as Europe and Israel. Greensoil's portfolio includes Ivy Energy (a solar-energy billing platform), smart-sensor firm Wynd and CarbonCure—another notable company you may have just heard of.

06. Michael Cooper

CHAIR, QUAYSIDE IMPACT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

For reviving Toronto's smart-city dreams

Remember Sidewalk Toronto, Google's proposed smart-city project in Toronto's east end? Thanks to Michael Cooper, president of real estate developer Dream Unlimited, that epic fail will soon be nothing more than a best-forgotten nightmare. Cooper is now shepherding the Quayside Project, an all-electric, zero-carbon, car-free, mixed-use development at the nexus point of Parliament Street and Lake Shore Boulevard. The blueprint for the eight-acre community includes 4,300 residential units (800 of which are designated affordable), a two-acre "community forest," a rooftop urban farm and a brand-new performing arts centre. Lending the project even more credibility, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation have come aboard as a partner, joining Crow's Theatre and the Bentway.

08. Courtney Cooper

PRINCIPAL, ALATE PARTNERS

She's Canadian proptech's prime mover

Virtual open houses. Sophisticated property-management software. It's all part of proptech, or property technology, a field that's exploded recently. In 2021, the global proptech market was valued at US$25 billion, and it's expected to grow by almost 16 per cent per year through 2030. No Canadian is a bigger proptech booster than Courtney Cooper. As a principal at Toronto's Alate Partners, she leads investments in proptech companies. And as co-founder of Proptech Collective—a group of similarly tech-savvy entrepreneurs, brokers and city-builders—Cooper's been instrumental in dragging Canadian real estate into the 21st century. The industry continues to grapple with thorny issues (affordability; a stubbornly persistent pandemic), but Cooper speaks in solutions: more transparent data, collaboration and inclusivity.

09. Ian Arthur

CO-FOUNDER, NIDUS3D

For printing solutions to the housing crisis

Ian Arthur has one of the more eclectic CVs you'll encounter: in his youth, he was head chef at the famed Chez Piggy restaurant in Kingston, Ontario, and between 2018 and 2022, he was an MPP for the Ontario NDP. During his tenure, Arthur served on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, where he learned firsthand about his constituents' housing struggles. In 2021, Arthur pivoted yet again, co-founding Nidus3D, a startup specializing in the affordable—and quick!—3D printing of construction materials. Its first project is also the first fully 3D-printed concrete residential structure in Canada: a fourplex, produced in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, which went up in Leamington, Ontario, last fall. Nidus3D is currently at work on larger and more complex buildings—including a two-storey studio—all across North America. Print it, and they will come.

10. Oliver Lang

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, INTELLIGENT CITY

He's speeding up Canada's construction

Given the global construction industry's massive pollution—it accounted for 37 per cent of energy and process-related CO_2 emissions in 2021—its sluggish moves toward sustainability have been maddening. Oliver Lang, head of Vancouver-based housing tech company Intelligent City, is changing that. Intelligent City fuses old-school materials (wood, in the form of mass timber) with cutting-edge technology (like robotics) to produce a scalable, cheaper process of prefab construction. Several of its surprisingly attractive homes now dot B.C.'s Lower Mainland, and an 18-storey apartment building is currently in the rezoning stage. While the company's been around for 15 years, it's benefiting from a boost of VC cash and evolving building codes, not to mention a second manufacturing plant planned for Ontario. It seems the industry might finally be catching up.

Williams by Derek Shapton; Greenberg, Michael Cooper, Courtney Cooper, Arthur and Lang courtesy of the subjects

THE POWER LIST › HEALTH CARE INNOVATORS

Canada's doctors, nurses, hospitals and patients are in crisis. Here come the healers.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS BEAUCHAMP

01

Alika Lafontaine

PRESIDENT, CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

BEFORE, HE WAS JUST ONE DOCTOR. NOW, HE'S WORKING TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR ALL OF THEM.

People often describe the calamity in Canadian health care in the same way a clinician might diagnose a bone or lung: fractured, broken, on the verge of total collapse. It's also a story told largely from patients' points of view. They lack access to GPs, contend with ER closures and interminable surgical backlogs—and sometimes die while watching the clock in the waiting area. But on the other side of the curtain, doctors are dealing with their own health problems and standing by helplessly as their personal lives are swallowed up by the sinkhole their profession has become. Alika Lafontaine, the Canadian Medical Association's current (and first Indigenous) president knows this; they've confided in him.

Since 2022, the veteran anesthesiologist, based in Grande Prairie, Alberta, has consulted with politicians, policymakers and the roughly 70,000 physicians and trainees who belong to the CMA, the largest advocacy group for Canadian doctors. He's pushing for a streamlined licensing protocol, one that allows physicians to more easily cross provincial borders, to practise where they're most needed. He's also trying to revive his colleagues' morale, hollowed out by thousands-deep patient rosters and months-long stints without so much as a vacation day. It's a good thing anesthesiologists are known for their steady hands.

Lafontaine has always calmly unravelled obstacles that, to others, appear intractable. Born and raised in southern Saskatchewan, he was diagnosed with a developmental delay in elementary school. His mother (who immigrated from Tonga) and his father (who is Métis, with a master's in education administration) were told their son would never earn a high school diploma. Medicine, then, seemed entirely out of the question. But thanks to homeschooling by his devoted parents, at just 16, Lafontaine became one of the youngest-ever recipients of an undergraduate NSERC research grant through the University of Regina, where he graduated with a major in chemistry. Later, with the support of an entry program tailored to Indigenous students, Lafontaine was admitted to the University of Saskatchewan. He was the only Indigenous student there at the time.

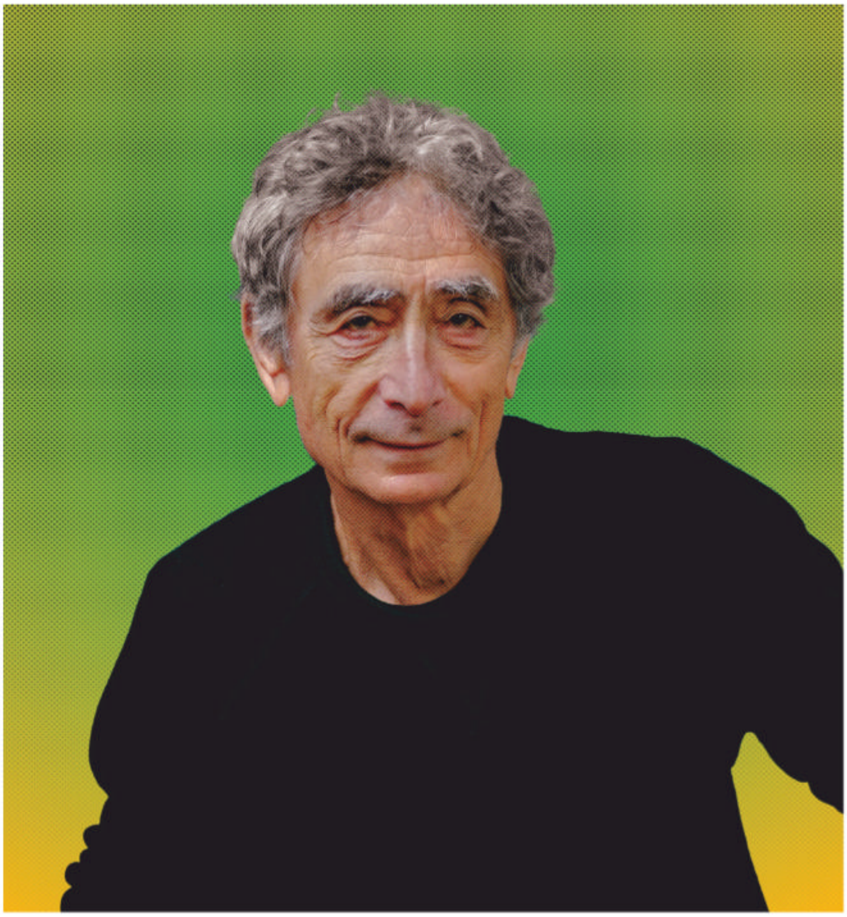
Being the "first and only" can be a badge of honour or a crushing weight, depending on how you carry it. Lafontaine used his singular perspective to raise serious questions about a deeply entrenched crisis in Canadian health care: why were Indigenous people in his home province of Saskatchewan, particularly those living on reserves, so sick compared to everyone else? In 2016, Keeseekoose, Cote and Key First Nations declared a state of emergency. It was rare that a week went by without a death attributed to opioids, and funeral processions filled their band halls. Through 2017, Lafontaine co-led a national strategy with organizations representing 150 First Nations, forming the Indigenous Health Alliance, which sought to bridge the cultural gap in care by bolstering patient-doctor trust and, of course, funding. But the stories he heard about Northern Ontario nursing stations without resuscitation equipment and people leaving hospitals with improperly casted broken legs—all of them tragically commonplace events in Indigenous communities—were harbingers of the very same problems that now exist country-wide. Forget sporadic fires: the entire forest is burning.

Lafontaine's ability to consider the greater whole was his biggest asset when he assumed the CMA's top job. The issue that's led Canadian health care into such a deep state of disrepair is, he believes, fragmentation. Private clinics, imported nurses—they're just new manifestations of Canada's very old piecemeal mindset, one that's resulted in a network of medical facilities where providers can't even keep track of the equipment between them, and where hospitals in one province, like B.C., can have an oversupply of anesthesiologists while Canada somehow grapples with a national deficit.

LAFONTAINE'S ABILITY TO CONSIDER THE GREATER WHOLE WAS HIS BIGGEST ASSET WHEN HE ASSUMED THE CMA'S TOP JOB

Lafontaine's main priority as CMA head honcho will be pushing for pan-Canadian licensure, an overhaul that would allow doctors to transcend provincial and territorial borders without enduring time-consuming recertifications that can, in the current system, run docs up to $3,000 a pop. He sees promise in the federal government's proposed $196-billion funding boost, a financial band-aid that also includes commitments to support regional movement. He'll also be doubling down on team-based care, a model that allows patients to be referred to physicians who may not be in their jurisdiction but have more bandwidth to help them, if their current doc is strapped. (And they probably are.)

The way Lafontaine sees it, the future of Canadian health care doesn't hinge on eerily precise robotics or state-of-the-art facilities but on our ability to bring his fellow doctors back from the brink. Part of that involves holding firm at policy tables. Another part is helping physicians help us. His sector may be facing one of the worst HR problems in Canadian history, but like any skilled care expert would, Lafontaine is there to provide a listening ear (and steady hands) as its bones are reset. *—Katie Underwood*



02

Gabor Maté

PHYSICIAN & AUTHOR

FOR MAINSTREAMING THE NOTION THAT THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS NORMAL

Maté was an established author decades before his latest bestseller, *The Myth of Normal*, captured the public consciousness (and blew many a mind) last year. The Hungarian-born physician spent years practising medicine on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, training his compassionate eye on the city's addiction issues and—the real game changer—linking them (and poverty) to past trauma. As Canadian society confronts political minefields, like drug decriminalization, medically assisted death and other compounded crises, it makes sense that the Gospel of Gabor has been embraced by right-leaning celebrity podcasters (Joe Rogan!), literary circles (22 weeks atop the *Globe and Mail*'s non-fiction list!) and everyday self-help seekers alike. Maté's message—that stress is normal when society isn't—is deeply of the moment.

03. Michael Dingle

COO, TELUS HEALTH

For bringing virtual care to millions of workers

Michael Dingle knows a healthy worker is a happy worker, especially post-pandemic. Mere months after he took over as head of operations at Telus Health, the company acquired LifeWorks (formerly Morneau Shepell) for a cool $2.3 billion. Since then, the digital-health venture has signed corporate clients including Walmart, providing feel-good benefits (like 24/7 virtual care) to the retailer's 100,000-strong army of Canadian employees. It's a welcome advancement in a climate of IRL medical bottlenecks—and WFH blues—but it also put Telus at the centre of the country's ongoing public-versus-private squabble. Last December, British Columbia's Medical Services Commission filed for an injunction against the firm's LifePlus program, alleging that its enticing fee-for-service plan contravened B.C.'s Medicare Protection Act.

07. Mona Gupta

PSYCHIATRIST, UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL

For forging the future of MAID

If Canada's health-care system is experiencing a crisis of morale, the issue of medical assistance in dying, or MAID, seems to hinge on a crisis of conscience. Gupta, a nationally recognized voice in the field of bioethics, was chosen last year to chair an expert panel convened by the Liberal government to provide recommendations on how to safely extend MAID to Canadians whose sole medical condition is mental illness. (Some critics have argued that medically assisted death could become an inadvertent "cure" for things like poverty and homelessness.) In the face of the government tabling legislation to push back MAID's expansion to March of 2024, Gupta has represented a rare (and uniquely qualified) voice of dissent against the delay, standing up for Canadians' right to die on their own terms and timelines.

Maté by Gurudayal Khalsa; Dingle and Gupta courtesy of the subjects

04. Tomi Poutanen

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, SIGNAL 1

He's putting AI to work in our ERs

Pull back the curtain on many of Canada's most exciting AI-driven projects and you'll likely find Tomi Poutanen at the helm. (A couple biggies: Toronto's tech-focused venture-capital outfit Radical Ventures and machine-learning research firm Layer 6, which was snapped up by TD Bank in 2018 for a cool US$100 million.) With Signal 1, Poutanen is using all that AI acumen to improve patient flow in and out of Canada's overcrowded ERs and hospital beds (which continue to be premium real estate). In January, Signal 1 was rolled out at Grand River Hospital in Kitchener, Ontario, where it analyzed the facility's wealth of electronic medical records and delivered real-time data on how and when to discharge patients directly to some presumably grateful docs. Here's another prediction: Signal 1 is likely to scale Canada-wide.

05. Leigh Chapman

CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

For stopping the mass exodus of nurses

Canada hadn't had a chief nursing officer in almost a decade, but faced with a desperate staffing deficit—which could hit a shortage of 120,000 nurses by 2030—the federal government tapped Leigh Chapman to step in last year. Chapman, who got involved in addictions medicine after the death of her older brother, Brad, from opioid use, is something of a Renaissance nurse. She's got expertise in areas such as long-term care, mental health and, happily, health workforce planning. For the next year, Chapman will provide wise counsel to Canada's governments (provincial and federal), regulatory bodies and other health-policy bigwigs, advocating for relief measures such as faster hiring of internationally accredited nurses, plus cross-provincial registration for the roughly 400,000 nurses practising at home. If Chapman has any say, there will soon be many more of them.

06. Timothy Caulfield

PROFESSOR & AUTHOR

He's treating misinformation like the pandemic it is

Timothy Caulfield calls bullshit—on anti-maskers, conspiracy theorists, Gwyneth Paltrow and pretty much anything that goes "quack." Caulfield, a recent recipient of the Order of Canada and a Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy, has so far dedicated an acclaimed Netflix documentary series (*A User's Guide to Cheating Death*) and four books to tackling the the modern scourge of pandemic-induced misinformation—a phenomenon that even the World Health Organization has classified, rather cleverly, as an "infodemic." As Canada's COVID-19 vaccine-uptake rates continue to bottom out, Caulfield's debunking will grow ever more valuable, on Twitter and elsewhere. His first recommendation: teaching kids critical-thinking skills—starting in kindergarten.

08. John Sinclair

PRESIDENT, NOVARI

He's proving that lowering wait times isn't, well, brain surgery

As Ontario's Ford government gears up to expand the suite of services offered at for-profit surgical clinics, John Sinclair, president of the health-tech firm Novari, has parallel plans to make the public route run more smoothly. Last December, Novari received a whack of provincial cash to equip hospitals dotted around eastern Ontario with its proprietary centralized wait-list software. Ideally, that will result in slashed wait times for procedures, more seamless coordination of services between facilities in the region and fewer surgical bottlenecks created by COVID-related postponements. (At one point last year, that count exceeded one million surgeries.) The whole shebang is a first-of-its-kind initiative anywhere in Canada. Hospitals in Cornwall, Nepean and Gloucester are part of Novari's early 2023 rollout.

09. Patricia Gauthier

PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER, MODERNA CANADA

For bringing the vax back home

When Gauthier became Moderna's first Canadian lead in 2020—a.k.a. peak pandemic—she quickly got to work. Since then, Gauthier, who previously spent more than a decade at pharma giant GSK, has overseen a country-wide effort to establish Canada as an epicentre of vaccine production. Last November, Moderna broke ground on a state-of-the-art facility just outside of Laval, Quebec, with a completion date set for 2024, an annual quota of 100 million COVID vaccines and the promise of a new biotech bubble outside of Toronto. If that weren't enough, Moderna is currently experimenting with another revolutionary RNA-based inoculation, this time against RSV, a respiratory virus that devastated emergency rooms last cold season. The company plans to submit its RSV vaccine for approval in the first half of this year.

10. Alan Forster

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT, CHIEF INNOVATION & QUALITY OFFICER, OTTAWA HOSPITAL

For helping to build the hospital of the future in Canada's capital

What could a smart hospital do? Ideally, monitor patients' medication use, contain plenty of physician-friendly AI tools, help docs predict bed counts and generally shake up standards for care, Canada-wide. Those are the starter goals of a new partnership between the global med-tech company Becton, Dickinson and Company and Ottawa Hospital, led by the facility's own Alan Forster. Forster, who in the past has been a vocal critic of the Canadian health-care system's techno-paralysis, predicts that his workplace's intelligent overhaul could eventually track medical efficiencies right down to bags of IV fluid used. The Ottawa Hospital plans to get progressively smarter (and cooler) until the planned opening of its new Civic campus in 2028.

Poutanen, Sinclair and Forster, courtesy of the subjects; Chapman by Geoff George; Caulfield by Curtis Trent Photography; Gauthier by Wade Hudson

THE POWER LIST › GAMING TYCOONS

These tech whizzes are ensuring the revolution will be gamified—and Canadian

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD LAM

Hair and makeup by Mayillah Ezekiel

01

Jade Raymond

FOUNDER, HAVEN STUDIOS

CANADA'S GAMING POWERHOUSE SET OUT TO DO HER OWN THING. THEN SONY CAME CALLING.

Jade Raymond knows a thing or two about world-building. In the span of her two-decade career, the 47-year-old veteran developer from Montreal watched (and played along) as the standard for gaming technology rose from Mario—now in 3D!—to characters rendered in such uncanny detail that they could easily be mistaken for flesh-and-blood humans. Reality blurred even further during the pandemic, when gameplay morphed from an entertaining pastime to a full-blown social lifeline, whether in the form of a chaotic *Fortnite* battle royale or a friendly night-fishing expedition in *Animal Crossing*.

In February of 2021, Raymond learned that Google would be shuttering Stadia, its in-house gaming operation, where she was VP. She saw a window to carve out her own niche: Haven Studios, a game development firm headquartered in Montreal's Ville-Marie neighbourhood. Last year, Sony acquired Haven—its first Canadian company—and tasked Raymond and her team with making a much-anticipated, hush-hush multiplayer PlayStation title. Basically, it's Raymond's universe; we're just playing in it.

Before she was the heaviest hitter in Canadian gaming, Raymond and her sister honed their chops on their shared Nintendo consoles. (Their mom figured: *Hey, it's more interactive than television!*) Other well-meaning, slightly unimaginative adults often told Raymond that the only logical endpoint for her combined passions of math, science and art was an architecture career. Instead, she devoted her teen years to beating her uncle's high scores (all of them), dabbling in robot-building and rudimentary programming, and eventually enrolling in a computer-science degree at McGill University. Her first postgrad job—as a software engineer for Sony's online *Jeopardy!* game—was followed by some breakneck levelling-up: co-producer of Electronic Arts's *The Sims Online*; co-creator of *Assassin's Creed*, an adventure franchise that's sold more than 140 million copies worldwide; founder of Ubisoft's first Toronto studio; and, eventually, her VP role at Stadia. By 2018, Raymond was name-checked alongside Jeff Bezos and Ellen DeGeneres on the Variety500—as its resident "gaming powerhouse."

Raymond's vision for her own firm involved a flatter, freer hierarchy untethered from day-to-day corporate oversight. Funny, then, that one of Haven's earliest financial backers was none other than Sony Interactive Entertainment. Raymond's initial team, a ragtag group of 25 who'd clocked time at Google and on titles like *Tomb Raider* and *Rainbow Six Siege*, quickly got to work designing new IP via the cloud. The Sony acquisition—for an undisclosed sum—came a year later. (N.B. "undisclosed" doesn't typically mean "small.") Also cryptic are the details of Haven's first live-service multiplayer game, one that Raymond has, to date, only described as an "evolving world focused on freedom, thrill and playfulness."

It's no mystery why Sony chose Raymond's outfit to be the first PlayStation studio in Canada, a country with a video-game industry that generates an estimated $5.5 billion annually. In the last four years, big-name foreign companies like Nintendo have snapped up domestic studios—like Halifax's Alpha Dog and Vancouver's Next Level Games—eager to capitalize on our animators, engineers, composers, AI experts and wealth of developers. Montreal, home to Haven, Epic and, as of early February, the South Korean developer Krafton, is the fifth-largest video game development hub in the world.

HAVEN STUDIOS' WORK ON THAT SECRET SONY MULTIPLAYER TITLE HAS BECOME A HUGE TALENT DRAW

In the past, Raymond has modestly joked that Quebec's temperatures lend themselves well to a flourishing gaming culture, but Haven's work on that secret Sony title has itself become a huge talent draw. As of this past February, the company had grown to a staff of 130. That head count now includes former aerospace engineers (experts in simulation environments) and machine-learning whizzes (busy working on customizable 3D avatars for players). One of Haven's highest-profile hires was ex-Googler Jalal El Mansouri, the former technical architect on Ubisoft's smash hit *Rainbow Six Siege*. He's now in charge of Haven's R&D.

Haven's staffers are hard at work: in the coming months, they'll be moving from pre-production to proper production on the still-definitely-super-secret multiplayer Sony title. Raymond, whose startup has officially graduated from itty-bitty indie to a full-blown expansion pack (to borrow a phrase), continues to bolster Montreal's gaming scene, often inviting smaller local developers to Haven's HQ for instructive "tech talks." For all of her public engagement, Raymond, a self-described introvert, still makes time for play, her original passion—kicking back with a headset and enjoying rounds of *Valheim* with her staff, or the slightly more analog multiplayer title *Catan* with her kids.

—Katie Underwood

02

Chris Overholt

PRESIDENT & CEO, OVERACTIVE MEDIA

HE'S MAKING GAMING ENTHUSIASTS OUT OF CANADA'S IRL SPORTS FANS

After more than 20 years working in traditional athletics—including stints with MLSE, the Miami Dolphins and the Canadian Olympic Committee—Chris Overholt made the leap into a new arena: e-sports. In 2018, he became president and CEO of OverActive Media, Canada's largest e-sports ownership group. So far, Overholt's roster includes teams like Toronto Defiant, which is devoted to the wildly popular game *Overwatch*, and Toronto Ultra, which plays *Call of Duty* (also professionally). And here's good news for gaming fans keen to geek out in person: in 2021, Overholt announced plans to open a 7,000-seat, multi-purpose arena in Toronto that could host e-sports events. Soon, a night out drinking beer and watching gamers do their thing could be as hot a ticket as the Raptors or Jays.

03. Rémi Racine

FOUNDER & CEO,
BEHAVIOUR INTERACTIVE

He's the biggest name in indie gaming

Want to play hide-and-seek with Ghostface from *Scream*? (Probably not.) In *Dead by Daylight*, you can run from him, plus a whole host of other scary characters. The multi-platform game—which has more than 50 million players—is the flagship title from Behaviour Interactive, the largest indie gaming company in Canada. Studio head Rémi Racine is the brain behind Behaviour's burgeoning empire, which started as a small firm that made CD-ROM games before producing *Jersey Devil* for the original PlayStation in 1997. By 2000, it was developing games for three major companies (Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo). But Behaviour's biggest success by far came with the release of *Dead by Daylight* in 2016. In 2022 alone, the company earned more than $260 million, acquired the American developer Midwinter Entertainment and set up a brand-new Toronto office.

07. Henri-Charles Machalani

CEO, MISTPLAY

For giving big bonuses to Canada's loyal gamers

Smartphones have transformed how many of us game. But unlocking bonuses and seemingly infinite levels can get expensive: in the United States, new gamers pay about US$17 a month, while established players can spend more than US$26. Henri-Charles Machalani, a McGill grad and tech entrepreneur, saw an opportunity. In 2015, he launched Mistplay, a loyalty program for mobile gamers. The longer a user plays their chosen games, the more points they earn—which they can then use to redeem rewards. (The company makes money through referrals from game publishers and advertising.) Looping in mobile-game big-timers like *FarmVille* and *Rise of Kingdoms* has paid off for Machalani: by 2022, Mistplay had grown by more than 4,000 per cent. Machalani also sold a majority of the company to GrowthCurve Capital, which he hopes will further extend its reach.

Overholt and Racine, courtesy of the subjects; Machalani by Sarah Mongeau-Birkett/La Presse

04. Christophe Derennes

HEAD, UBISOFT MONTREAL

For uploading diversity to the gamersphere

Ubisoft, the company behind the massive *Assassin's Creed* series, was the first big studio to set up shop in Montreal. But when Christophe Derennes took over in 2020, he inherited a fractured workplace. Former Ubisoft Canada head Yannis Mallat left in the midst of an HR meltdown, with allegations of discrimination and misconduct swirling at several international Ubisoft outposts. Since then, Derennes has overseen the instalment of a company ombudsman and code of conduct, but there's also been an effort to diversify the characters in the video games themselves. *Rainbow Six Siege* has rolled out several LGBTQ+ characters for players to choose from. Derennes's job now will be finding Ubisoft's next big hit: its roster of upcoming games includes a new *Assassin's Creed* iteration, *Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora*, and, soon, a new *Star Wars* title.

05. Imane Anys

TWITCH STREAMER

She's a Canadian Twitch trailblazer

Pokimane is, without question, one of the hottest celebrities in the world of online streaming. Behind the headset is a 26-year-old Moroccan-Canadian woman named Imane Anys. In 2013, she started streaming *League of Legends*, amassing an enviable audience on assorted social-media channels, but especially on Twitch. Popular streamers on the online platform—where viewers watch both the game and the person playing it—can make thousands of dollars in a week, thanks to subscription payments, tips and various kinds of advertising. Anys herself is estimated to make around US$38,000 every month. On a platform where nearly 80 per cent of users are men, Anys's warm, personable style helped her stand out. In April of 2022, she smashed through the nine-million-follower mark on Twitch, making her the most popular woman on the platform.

06. Shyang Kong

MANAGING PARTNER,
SKYBOX LABS

For taking the Halo *franchise to new heights*

Of the thousands of games on the market today, few have reached the popularity of *Halo*. The ongoing tribulations of main character Master Chief are big business for *Halo*'s parent company, Microsoft—US$5 billion worth—and the franchise was recently adapted for a TV show on Paramount+. A large chunk of that success is owed to Shyang Kong, an exec at B.C.'s SkyBox Labs—along with partners Derek MacNeil and Steven Silvester—who also worked on *Halo Infinite*, the latest entry in the first-person shooter series. Last year, SkyBox expanded to three offices—two in Burnaby, one in Victoria—to help with the immense number of gaming contracts coming down the pipe. The biggest news, though, is the most recent: earlier this year, SkyBox announced it had been acquired by NetEase, a Chinese tech firm, for an undisclosed sum.

08. Nour Polloni

STUDIO HEAD, BEENOX

For hearing the Call of Duty*…call of duty*

There's nothing quite like sitting down after a long day, kicking up your feet, firing up *Call of Duty* and hightailing it into a war zone with your friends. For this wholesome extracurricular pastime, we have Nour Polloni to thank—at least in part. Polloni's the studio head of the Quebec City–based gaming outfit Beenox, which has been an assistant developer on the massively successful *Call of Duty* franchise since 2015. (Beenox also engages in some friendly competitions with its American counterparts, who they often beat.) In 2020, yet another team effort was announced: Beenox, already hard at work co-developing *Call of Duty: Warzone*, would also be taking on a new mobile game for the popular first-person shooter series. On the heels of this news, the company has hired 150 people since 2021. It also opened some brand-new office digs in Montreal just last year.

09. Peter Kieltyka

CEO, HORIZON
BLOCKCHAIN GAMES

He's made blockchain gaming bankable

Cryptocurrency took a hit last year, but a few intrepid blockchain-backed companies have survived the winter. Take Horizon Blockchain Games, a startup that brings gaming to the NFT world. In its flagship game, *Skyweaver*, players can buy and trade items in a blockchain marketplace. (This means they're competing for things with real-world value.) Horizon's also created Sequence, a smart wallet and developer platform that aims to be the go-to infrastructure for Web3 games and applications. Although uptake on blockchain gaming has been slow to start, venture capital firms are betting on the long term. In October of 2022, the company closed a Series A funding round worth US$40 million. CEO Peter Kieltyka says they will expand the game, launch a new market where users can trade tokens, and focus on marketing efforts to attract even more new players.

10. Sasha Hostyn

PRO VIDEO GAME PLAYER

She's StarCraft II*'s winningest woman*

From a young age, Sasha Hostyn—better known by her username, Scarlett—was known for her analytical mind, mastering games like *Magic: The Gathering* and Xiangqi, or Chinese chess. But in 2011, when Hostyn started playing *StarCraft II*, a real-time strategy game from Blizzard Entertainment, she was vaulted onto the international stage. A year later, she handily defeated a number of highly ranked pros at a tournament in Las Vegas. Now something of a *StarCraft* legend, Hostyn, who hails from Kingston, Ontario, has been widely considered one of the best players in the world, pocketing more than US$270,000 to date—the highest amount earned by a woman in e-sports. (By 2018, Hostyn's earnings were so massive that they landed her in the *Guinness World Records.*) Since 2021, she's been playing for Shopify Rebellion, a pro StarCraft team. Unsurprisingly, Scarlett's kicking butt.

Derennes, Anys, Kong and Kieltyka courtesy of the subjects; Polloni courtesy of CNW Group/Québec International; Hostyn courtesy of Shopify Rebellion

THE POWER LIST › HOLLYWOOD NORTH STARS

The Canadian performers, creators and executives shaking up the industry

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT MARTIN

01

Denis Villeneuve

FILMMAKER

FORGET STREAMING. THIS BLOCKBUSTER DIRECTOR WANTS TO SAVE THE SILVER SCREEN.

***Dune* is Denis Villeneuve's** love letter to the big screen. The movie's sweeping landscapes and colossal creatures are such that shrinking the size of the canvas would be like taking a battle-axe to Villeneuve's giant-sandworm-sized ambition. Then along came a pandemic to do just that. *Dune: Part One* arrived in October of 2021 as part of "Project Popcorn," an experiment by WarnerMedia in which the studio released all of its features simultaneously on HBO Max. It was a way to grow the new streaming service while appeasing COVID-wary audiences—but to Villeneuve, it was an unacceptable affront.

And so the 55-year-old director did what any uncompromising, overprotective but also fundamentally Canadian artist would do: he wrote a strongly worded letter, calling out Warner for aligning itself with the interests of a telecom giant (the studio's parent company is AT&T) and bemoaning his movie's diminished box office potential. Above all, though, he objected as a filmmaker who still believes that there is something magical, even transcendent, about a group of strangers sitting together in a dark room. He's not the only big name director to pledge his allegiance to the cinematic experience, but with his unique ability to meld mass appeal and uncompromising artistry, he's the guy with the best chance of saving it.

The odyssey of Villeneuve's *Dune* is almost as protracted and theatrical as Frank Herbert's book—the epic saga of a young man's quest to save his home planet. The novel has frequently been declared unadaptable due to its byzantine plot lines, as well as the expectations of hardcore Herbert fans, who make Trekkies look nonchalant. In the early '80s, one such fan was a 13-year-old from small-town Bécancour, Quebec, a place where the career goal of a "filmmaker" was akin to "space cowboy." Even so, Villeneuve's parents encouraged him to follow his passions, including mapping out what a film version of his favourite book might look like. (Many artists say their whole life has been leading up to a certain project, but few can produce 40-year-old storyboards.)

Villeneuve's entire career has been a road to Arrakis. After film school at the Université de Montréal, he appeared as a contestant on a reality show for aspiring directors. In 2009 he made *Polytechnique*, a dark, black-and-white drama about the Montreal massacre that got a lot of attention in Canada. His 2010 follow up, *Incendies*, earned an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film, and soon Villeneuve was getting scripts from Hollywood studios. After making films with stars like Jake Gyllenhaal and Emily Blunt, he entered the big leagues with *Arrival*, a sci-fi thriller starring Amy Adams that earned multiple Oscar nominations, nevermind $200 million at the box office. In 2017, *Blade Runner 2049* was another example of the human-centred, emotionally honest approach to science fiction that has become Villeneuve's signature.

He was presenting *Arrival* at the Venice Film Festival when a journalist asked him what movie he would make if someone were to write him a blank cheque—and by now his answer should be obvious. That interview made its way to Mary Parent, the production chief at Legendary Pictures, who had recently purchased the rights to *Dune*. She called Villeneuve for a meeting, where he laid out two conditions. The first was that they turn the book into two movies; the story was too big for a single one. The studio agreed (assuming *Part One* did well). Number two, he wanted to film on a real set—none of this CGI crap. He would take Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya to the desert.

In different hands, *Dune* might have been a faster burn with more explosions and less existential angst. But that wasn't the vision of the director, who clutched his decades-old copy of Herbert's masterpiece for the entire shoot. "My dream is to express myself with scope and still keep my identity alive. It sounds pretentious," he says. But in an industry where telecom giants call the shots, someone has to stand up for real sand.

> *WITH HIS UNIQUE ABILITY TO MELD MASS APPEAL AND UNCOMPROMISING ARTISTRY, HE'S THE GUY WITH THE BEST CHANCE OF SAVING CINEMA*

It helps that *Dune: Part One* was a hit—an Oscar nominee and a 2021 box-office bright spot, Project Popcorn notwithstanding. Last summer, Villeneuve returned to the desert to shoot a sequel that, he says, makes the original look like a little indie flick. When *Dune: Part Two* comes out in the fall, it will be in theatres and *only in theatres* (lesson learned: Villeneuve got it in writing). The career achievement that once seemed like a culmination feels more like a fresh start. Villeneuve says he wants to keep his schedule open to new possibilities: the "only" things he is attached to right now are a Cleopatra biopic, a movie version of *Rendezvous With Rama* (another classic sci-fi novel) and a possible third *Dune* movie. The teenager from Bécancour dreamed of a young warrior saving his home planet. But Canada's blockbuster auteur has an entire industry to rescue. And he's just getting started.

—Courtney Shea

02

The Weeknd

SINGER, PRODUCER & ACTOR

THE SCARBOROUGH SINGER HAS GONE FROM STADIUM SHOWS TO HBO

In the last year, Abel Tesfaye has had a top-selling stadium tour, an Oscar shortlist nod (he wrote the theme to *Avatar: The Way of Water*), six Juno nominations and a Spotify record for the most streamed song ever. Now, Scarborough's most impressive export is focused on a new realm of superstardom. *The Idol*, coming to HBO Max this year, is a six-episode series about an ambitious young pop star who gets sucked in by an enigmatic music-industry guru. Not a huge stretch for Tesfaye, who is also producer and co-creator. His partner is *Euphoria* creator Sam Levinson—a.k.a. the guy who taught Gen Z about appointment television—and his co-star is bona fide nepo-baby Lily-Rose Depp. *The Idol* is billing itself as "the sleaziest love story in all of Hollywood," but "most hyped" would make for an equally accurate tagline.

03. Sarah Polley

FILMMAKER

She's making prestige feminist films—and the Oscars are taking note

Sarah Polley, a rare auteur intent on upending the idea of the singular creative genius, has released her first film in a decade: *Women Talking*, based on Miriam Toews's novel about the aftermath of sexual assault in a Bolivian Mennonite colony. In an industry that has romanticized suffering for art, the set of *Women Talking* offered an inspiring alternative. Cast and crew were consulted for feedback, the set had a trauma therapist and workdays ended in time for family dinner. Polley's outlook is largely a response to her own negative experiences as a child actor, many of which are recounted in her bestselling 2022 memoir *Run Towards the Danger*. *Women Talking* was up for two Oscars—Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay—but Polley's ability to reimagine how her industry operates is where her impact will be most potent.

07. Michael Hackman

CEO, HACKMAN CAPITAL PARTNERS

He's making space for movie magic

The streaming era has brought unprecedented demand for new content—which means an unprecedented need for spaces to make it in. In this supply desert, Toronto has emerged as a new Studio City, with Michael Hackman as the de facto mayor. In 2021, the city announced a partnership with the California-based Hackman Capital Partners, or HCP, to build the Basin Media Hub, a $250-million investment that will include eight soundstages and anchor a larger innovation-themed district along the waterfront. HCP is also financing a $200-million redevelopment of the old Bombardier factory. Together, the projects scheduled for completion next year will add a whopping 1.5 million square feet of studio space—ideal for superhero smackdowns, epic space odysseys or whatever Guillermo del Toro might be dreaming up.

Weeknd by Pari Dukovic; Polley by Derek Shapton; Hackman courtesy of the subject

04. Craig Mazin & Neil Druckmann

SHOWRUNNERS,
THE LAST OF US

They turned Calgary and Edmonton into blockbuster TV towns

HBO's *The Last of Us*, the most expensive piece of CanCon ever produced, almost never was. For years, Neil Druckmann didn't think his emotional, slow-burn video game about a grieving father shepherding a young girl through a post-pandemic dystopia would translate to a traditional blockbuster. Sony optioned the title in 2014, but studio requests to make things bigger and sexier killed it. And it stayed that way until Druckmann learned that Craig Mazin, creator of *Chernobyl*, was interested. HBO coughed up a budget bigger than each of the first five seasons of *Game of Thrones*, and Alberta provided the sprawling, fungus-infested backdrop—plus a slew of jobs and tens of millions in tax credits, solidifying Wild Rose Country as a premium market for film and TV.

05. Domee Shi

FILMMAKER

For infiltrating Pixar's boys' club

Domee Shi's Best Animated Feature Oscar nomination for *Turning Red* is a second in what is otherwise a story of firsts. The 33-year-old Sheridan College grad, who won a golden statue for Best Animated Short in 2019, is the first woman to solo direct a Pixar movie in the studio's history. Her semi-autobiographical and gloriously surreal take on family, friendship and female puberty is also Pixar's first to star Asian characters, and the first to spotlight a Canadian city, showing Toronto's streetcars, cute neighbourhoods and the SkyDome in all their specific, sometimes broken-down beauty. The movie's theatrical release was dampened by Omicron, but critical reception was stellar, and Shi—who was recently promoted to Pixar's VP of creative—is already at work on a follow-up she describes as bigger and bolder. (Yes, bigger and bolder than a red panda the size of the SkyDome.)

06. Brendan Fraser

ACTOR

He's back—and standing by his values

In 2018, Brendan Fraser went public with allegations that a former president of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, or HFPA, had groped him during a luncheon in 2003, saying that this incident was part of why he pulled away from the industry (the official in question denied the allegations). Up until last year, he was earning paycheques from conventions to meet fans of *The Mummy* franchise, and then came a call from auteur Darren Aronofsky for *The Whale*. Fraser plays Charlie, a writing instructor struggling with obesity who wants to reconnect with his family before he dies. From its earliest screening, Fraser's performance has been a praise magnet—at TIFF they staged a tribute in his honour. But in January, he was a no-show at the Golden Globes, which is put on by the HFPA. He said his mother didn't raise a hypocrite. But she did raise a star.

08. Sharon Taylor

COO, ANIMAL LOGIC

She's working on family-friendly fun for everyone

More than a decade ago, Sharon Taylor quit a stable career in accounting to join Animal Logic, an animation studio working on its first feature: *Happy Feet*. In 2015, she left Australia, where Animal Logic is based, to oversee the launch of a Vancouver office. Since then, it's been a slew of kids' box-office hits that parents actually want to see: the *Lego* franchise, two live-action *Peter Rabbit* movies and, most recently, *DC League of Super-Pets*, a Warner Bros. co-production that opened at No. 1 last July. That same month, Animal Logic announced a Netflix partnership on top of upcoming deals with Warner Bros., Disney and New Line Cinema. Further expansion is afoot: the company's new 110,000-square-foot studio in Vancouver will anchor Main Alley Development, a Westbank hub dedicated to creative and tech industries.

09. Iman Vellani

ACTOR

For superheroically breaking barriers on television

Iman Vellani was a super-fan before she was a superhero: two years before scoring her breakout acting gig on the eponymous TV show, she dressed up as Ms. Marvel for Halloween. Her character can stretch and morph her body like Silly Putty, but Vellani's power may be her unshakable confidence: she shared four pages of questions with Marvel president Kevin Feige soon after they met, and he actually answered some of them. *Ms. Marvel* was an important milestone, featuring the MCU's first-ever Muslim superhero. Beloved by critics and embraced by fans, the show was named best superhero series on Rotten Tomatoes, and devotees are lobbying hard for a season two. In the meantime, Vellani will star in this fall's *The Marvels*, featuring an all-female superhero squad, including Captain Marvel (played by Brie Larson), plus *Avengers: Secret Wars*, coming in 2026.

10. Tantoo Cardinal

ACTOR

She's having a cinematic renaissance

Tantoo Cardinal made her name in '90s hits like *Dances With Wolves* and *Legends of the Fall* and, in 2009, was named to the Order of Canada. Normally this honour would be a sign of an impressive career on its way out to pasture, but for the 72-year-old Cree-Métis actor, the 2020s have been a renaissance of McConaugheyian proportions. Last December, she had a key supporting role in *Three Pines*, Amazon Prime's detective thriller based on Louise Penny's novels, which features the first pop culture depiction of Canada's residential school murders. Next up, Gen Z will meet Cardinal in Marvel's *Echo* series, alongside fellow Indigenous star Graham Greene. Speaking of cinematic royalty: Cardinal has an important role in Martin Scorsese's forthcoming *Killers of the Flower Moon*, a mystery based on the real-life murders of members of the Osage nation in the 1920s.

Mazin and Druckmann by Jorge Bispo; Shi, Fraser and Cardinal by Getty Images; Taylor courtesy of the subject; Vellani by Vanessa Heins

THE POWER LIST › FOOD TITANS

Meet the chefs, farmers and moguls changing the way we eat and drink

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LOBLAW COMPANIES LIMITED

01

Galen G. Weston

PRESIDENT, LOBLAW

FOOD COSTS ARE SOARING IN GROCERY STORES. WHAT IS GALEN WESTON DOING ABOUT IT?

Galen G. Weston knows us better than we know ourselves. As president of Loblaw, a subsidiary of George Weston Ltd., his roughly 2,500-location retail operation includes some two dozen grocery store and pharmacy banners like No Frills, Shoppers, T&T, Valu-mart, Zehrs and Real Canadian Superstore; virtual health care at PC Health; personal banking at PC Financial; and fast-fashion marvels at Joe Fresh. He knows what's in our kitchen cupboards and medicine cabinets, and you'll even likely receive eerily timed coupons for frequently purchased items in your inboxes and in-app offers. All that customer knowledge pays off: Loblaw makes $53 billion in annual sales, nearly twice that of Empire Co., its closest national competitor and the parent company of Sobeys.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Weston won kudos for topping up the wages of his stressed-out front-line workers and keeping food on the shelves. The goodwill didn't last. Last fall, as food inflation hit a 41-year high and social media reached a frenzy over outrageous prices for grocery staples, the op-ed pages and Parliament Hill fixated on the big three grocers: Metro Inc., Empire Co., and Loblaw. They all posted higher profits in the first half of 2022 compared to their average profits over the past five years, with Loblaw raking in the most. MPs called for hearings into the so-called "greedflation."

Weston announced in October that he'd freeze prices on his bargain line of No Name grocery products, but only until the end of January so people could have a nice holiday. In a letter to his PC Optimum customers, he said he felt their pain, but was met with trending doctored photos on Twitter of him wearing an oversized gold crown, or a No Name–yellow sweater emblazoned with "oligarch."

While Canadians struggled to pay their weekly grocery bills, Weston has received heat for his astronomical wealth. He earns $5.4 million annually, according to his last publicly reported compensation in 2021, which means he takes home more in a week than the average Canadian does in a year. He owns an estate outside Toronto, a family compound on the Florida coast and an entire island in Ontario's Georgian Bay. Over the course of the pandemic, the value of his family's shares in George Weston Ltd., founded by his great-grandfather and led by Weston as CEO, have swelled from $5.9 billion to $10.8 billion.

Weston has argued that grocers aren't to blame for inflation. Fault manufacturers and distributors for jacking up prices, the Ukraine war's disruption of international wheat supplies and fertilizers, the pandemic's persisting supply-chain messes and labour shortages, and the freaky floods and droughts driven by the climate crisis. His company denied allegations that they've profited from inflation, attributing their success in part to bolstered sales in higher-margin categories like beauty products. Loblaw's gross profit margins in food were flat in comparison, according to their chief financial officer. At the December parliamentary hearings on food inflation, after MPs summoned CEOs of major grocers, Loblaw sent a deputy.

Weston wants Canadians to blame the supply chain for inflation yet skirts over the fact that, in not-insignificant ways, he *is* the supply chain. He's the manufacturer of thousands of President's Choice and No Name private label products. Those same products outsell many other national brands. His company is also one of the biggest distributors of grocery products, from 23 warehouse complexes across the country—and the only available supply option for many independent grocers. He also just broke ground on a new fully automated distribution centre north of Toronto that'll sprawl across 1.2 million square feet.

WESTON WANTED CANADIANS TO BLAME THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR INFLATION, BUT IN NOT-INSIGNIFICANT WAYS, HE IS THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Grocery inflation won't end in 2023—a group of academics at Dalhousie University predict that the average Canadian family of four will spend $1,065 more on groceries this year due to inflation. McMaster University economist Jim Stanford recently weighed in, deciding that the grocery industry's "flat profit" numbers don't add up. He cited StatsCan data showing that Canadians are buying fewer groceries now than before the pandemic, but paying far more for them. The average food retail net margins have grown by three-quarters since the pandemic, from 1.62 to 2.85 per cent. Food and beverage retail has ballooned in annual profitability by $2.8 billion since 2019, making it one of the top 15 most profitable sectors in the economy (oil and banking remain on top of the pile).

Weston has created a company that tracks and knows its customers, prompting them to find everything they need at his stores. But as consumers feel the squeeze as their bills pile up higher than before, his challenge for 2023 is to figure out how not to drive them away.

—Mark Pupo

02

Janet Zuccarini

CEO, GUSTO 54 RESTAURANT GROUP

THIS TORONTO-BORN RESTAURATEUR IS A HOLLYWOOD PHENOM

During the pandemic, *Top Chef Canada* judge Janet Zuccarini emerged as one of the country's most ambitious restaurateurs, getting to work on six new spots under her company Gusto 54 Restaurant Group. Her total tally will soon go up to 16, with 14 restaurants running in Toronto, one in Los Angeles and one more set to open there this year. (She lives part time in Beverly Hills with her rock-star partner, the Band legend Robbie Robertson.) Stella is her upcoming Italian venture, set to open in an 8,000-square-foot West Hollywood space. Angelenos already know Zuccarini from Felix, which topped *Esquire*'s list of America's best new restaurants in 2017, with their critic calling it "the incarnation of everything life ought to be." That's a hard act to follow, but topping her own achievements seems to be Zuccarini's specialty.

03. Riad Nasr

CHEF-OWNER, LE ROCK

For bringing culinary star power back to Midtown Manhattan

Montrealer Riad Nasr and his culinary collaborator, Lee Hanson, have known each other for almost 30 years. As chefs, they turned the SoHo brasserie Balthazar into a New York City legend, serving some 1,500 guests a day. Last year they did it again, this time as the owners of Le Rock, a brasserie and one of several restaurants comprising a superbistro in Rockefeller Center. Tables in the lavish bronze and mahogany dining room have become some of the hardest to snag in Manhattan, with New Yorkers who once steered clear of 30 Rock cramming into leather banquettes for garlic-drenched escargot and bison au poivre. The menu is also unapologetically French. Nasr has said he's not interested in twists or new takes on the fare, and he's hoping to pack the place elbow to elbow. He's succeeded—and brought his buzz back to Midtown while he's at it.

07. Ted Fleming

CEO & FOUNDER,
PARTAKE BREWING

For taking the booze out of craft beer

Alcohol may soon be as taboo as tobacco, and Ted Fleming is here for it. He's the CEO and founder of Calgary-based Partake Brewing, maker of the bestselling boozeless beer in Canada. Since he founded the label on Kickstarter six years ago, 5,000 stores in North America have picked it up. His business will likely only grow bigger now that the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction recommended that people cut back to two drinks or less per week, down from 10 to 15 per week in 2011, to avoid risks of various cancers. Turning away from alcohol is also generational: Gen Z drinks 20 per cent less than millennials, and non-alcoholic beer sales have more than tripled over the past decade. And Partake is here to stay. Fleming recently raised US$16.5 million, so nobody has to choose between their health and their beloved craft beers.

Zuccarini by Jake Rosenberg; Nasr by Stephen Speranza; Fleming courtesy of the subject

04. Michael Medline

CEO, EMPIRE CO.

He's bringing Farm Boys to every street

Six years ago, Michael Medline took over as CEO of the Nova Scotia–based Empire Co., parent company to Sobeys, Safeway and FreshCo, and pulled off a reversal of fortunes. The company's profits had been tanking, but he boosted earnings per share from 11 cents in 2017 to 73 cents in 2022, racking up $30 billion in sales last year, thanks in part to aggressive expansion like the acquisition of Farm Boy and buying a majority stake in Longo's. In September, Medline made waves with his defence of grocery store profits amid rampant inflation, declaring that he would not apologize for his company's success. Later that fall, the House of Commons agriculture committee launched an inquiry into grocery industry price gouging. The investigation is ongoing, and with the 10th Farm Boy opening in Toronto this past February, so is Empire Co.'s growth.

05. Mohammed Ashour

CEO & CO-FOUNDER, ASPIRE FOOD GROUP

For his bug-first approach to solving world hunger

Protein rich, environmentally friendly and dirt cheap, insects may be the food of the future. London, Ontario, became the epicentre of the bug boom thanks to insect farmer Mohammed Ashour, CEO and co-founder of Aspire Food Group. After raising $100 million, Ashour opened the world's largest cricket farm in 2021. The automated facility can produce more than 12 million kilograms of protein from crickets, using roughly the space it takes to raise six cows. Most bugs are freeze-dried and blended into food for pets, but Ashour recently signed a multimillion-dollar contract with a South Korean confection company that will use Aspire's cricket protein powder in bars and baked goods. Snacks are merely a glimpse of what's to come: Ashour and experts believe insect farming can offer a solution to global hunger.

06. Kirstin Beardsley

CEO, FOOD BANKS CANADA

For tackling food insecurity at the root

Kirstin Beardsley stepped into the role as CEO for Food Banks Canada a year ago, at the toughest time in the organization's 35-year history. As pandemic supports ended and inflation soared, people relying on their 4,750 hunger-relief organizations hit an all-time high: almost six million Canadians faced food insecurity. Beardsley set out to make sure those numbers—and the people behind them—weren't forgotten. She became a fixture in the news and sat on panels demanding long-term policy solutions, like more affordable housing, higher minimum wage, universal basic income and better support for people with disabilities. In a *Globe and Mail* op-ed, alongside food advocates Michael McCain and Nick Saul, she put the federal government on deadline, asking them to commit to cutting food insecurity in half by 2030. Your move, Prime Minister.

08. Barry Murchie

CEO, GOODLEAF

For future-proofing our country's greens

In December of 2022, GoodLeaf CEO Barry Murchie raised $150 million, a good chunk of it from McCain Foods, to expand the facilities of his hydroponic salad greens company. GoodLeaf's growth has the potential to shield Canada from a supply-chain disaster: 90 per cent of the leafy greens we consume come from the southwestern U.S., most of them from California, where crops are being pummelled by disease, drought and flooding. The company's cash infusion will allow its operations, which include a vertical greenhouse in Guelph, Ontario, to expand into Calgary and Montreal. Vertical farming is environmentally controlled, and indoor crops grown in these conditions are invulnerable to pests and climate hazards. Each of the two new facilities can turn out around two million pounds of greens annually, ensuring our access to homegrown salad bowls in the years to come.

09. Jessica Rosval

CHEF, CASA MARIA LUIGIA

She's cooking world-class Italian cuisine

Ten years ago, after training as a chef in her home province of Quebec, Jessica Rosval had a life-changing meal during a trip to Modena in northern Italy. She convinced the chef, three-Michelin-star-earner Massimo Bottura, to hire her and soon became his protégé. In 2019, he chose her to lead the kitchen at his luxury bed and breakfast, Casa Maria Luigia. There, she has served multi-course Italian feasts (that start at €330 per person) to Stanley Tucci and the Obamas, earning the title of best female chef in Italy from *Guida dell'Espresso*, the country's authoritative restaurant guide. In March of last year, she struck out with a side hustle. A leader in an industry known for being a boys' club, she's bringing new faces into the fold. At Roots, an eclectic Modena restaurant, she trains migrant women in the culinary arts and helps them bring their own dishes to the menu.

10. Isha Datar

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW HARVEST

For paving the way to lab-grown meat

Isha Datar is so influential in the field of cellular agriculture that she even coined the term. It refers to the process of harvesting animal cells, growing them in bioreactors and eventually passing the resulting meat to recipe developers, who turn it into highly believable burgers, chicken breasts, bacon and more. As executive director at the non-profit New Harvest, she believes her organization's R&D should be freely accessible to serve the future of food, not closely guarded intellectual property. And so she recently announced the new Institute of Cellular Agriculture at the University of Alberta, a research hub and startup incubator that aims to rapidly advance the field and solve some of the most pressing problems caused by factory farming—greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation—all through the science of making meat without animals.

Medline, Ashour, Beardsley, Murchie and Rosval courtesy of the subjects, Datar by Diana Levin

THE POWER LIST › EV ENTREPRENEURS

The movers and shakers Canada needs to make good on its electric ambitions

PHOTOGRAPH BY VANESSA HEINS

01

Marissa West

PRESIDENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR, GM CANADA

THIS MICHIGAN-RAISED AUTO EXEC IS HELPING CANADA USHER IN ITS EV REVOLUTION

Canada is aiming to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which means we'll have to change how we get around—and fast. The transportation industry is among the largest contributors to Canada's carbon footprint, spewing out some 22 per cent of emissions. Light-duty vehicles, including passenger cars, SUVs and pickups, account for 11 per cent on their own. That's why, in 2021, the federal government mandated that by 2035, all passenger vehicles will need to be electric. Imagine a country in which the roads are packed with electric cars, and highways are dotted with charging stations instead of gas pumps. Canada is funnelling billions of dollars into realizing that vision, creating incentives for car companies to go green and funding new public charging infrastructure. Marissa West, the new head of GM Canada, is making it happen on an industrial scale.

West was destined to work for General Motors. She was born and raised in Michigan, the heart of the North American auto industry, where three generations of her family worked for GM as engineers and factory employees. There were always GM cars around; her mother, Elaine, who worked as a dental hygienist, seemed to swap models every couple of years. Her father, Douglas, who held multiple jobs with the company, including as an electrical engineer, always performed routine car maintenance himself. West stood at his side in the family driveway, learning everything. As a kid in the '90s, she showed an aptitude for math and science. She went on to earn an undergrad in mechanical engineering from Michigan State and a master's in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan. In 2001, West took an internship at GM, and over the next two decades she climbed the ranks, absorbing the ins and outs of the company.

Last April, West was promoted from chief executive engineer in Michigan to president of GM Canada. She's now charged with overseeing the Canadian operation's offices, assembly plants, dealerships and technical centres. The promotion came at a crucial time in the company's 115-year history: GM has gone all-in on electric vehicles. In North America, it has invested more than $40 billion into EVs and autonomous vehicles. By 2035, GM intends to phase out tailpipe emissions on all light-duty vehicles, and the impact on Canada's carbon emissions could be staggering, given that GM Canada's vehicle sales account for some 15 per cent of the domestic auto market.

Last May, GM began transforming its assembly plant in Ingersoll, Ontario, into a full-scale EV operation, the first of its kind in Canada. GM spent $1 billion on the revamp, with some help from the federal and Ontario governments, which chipped in $259 million each. The overhaul was swift. In December, West met Justin Trudeau at the opening of the plant, and the pair watched as the first vehicle rolled off the line: the BrightDrop Zevo 600, a fully electric commercial delivery van. It comes with 600 cubic feet (hence the name) of storage space, takes less than two hours to juice up and can travel more than 400 kilometres on a charge. FedEx, DHL and Walmart have all placed orders. Overall, GM's goal is to produce 50,000 electric vehicles annually at the plant as soon as 2025.

The company also wants to supply the batteries for those vehicles. It recently broke ground on a $530-million battery plant in Quebec. Outside of Canada, GM has also put $650 million toward a lithium mine under development in Nevada, which it hopes will provide it with prime access to a crucial material needed to build those batteries.

THE FEDS ARE PUMPING BILLIONS INTO MAKING CANADA A NATION OF EV DRIVERS. MARISSA WEST IS MAKING IT HAPPEN ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE.

If West gets her way, millions of Canadians will be driving battery-powered GM vehicles by the end of the next decade. She still has some work to do, though. In Canada, only 4.5 per cent of new-vehicle sales are EVs, well behind Norway, where nearly three-quarters of new vehicles sold are electrified. The two biggest obstacles when it comes to EV adoption are insufficient charging infrastructure and high retail prices—typically thousands of dollars higher than the gas-guzzling alternative. Plenty of car buyers will be inclined to protect their retirement savings rather than the environment. And, because gas stations are more prevalent than charging stations (for now), car owners who take road trips will likely continue to favour old-fashioned engines. On the bright side, West is already looking for solutions. The small, sporty Chevrolet Bolt hatchback starts at a relatively modest $41,000. And GM is working with its 450 dealers nationwide, paying them to add charging stations in locations of their choice. If Canada hits its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, GM—with West behind the wheel—will deserve a big slice of the credit.

—Mathew Silver

02

Swamy Kotagiri

CEO, MAGNA INTERNATIONAL

HE'S LEADING AN OLD-SCHOOL COMPANY INTO AN ELECTRIC FUTURE

Last century, Magna became a world leader in auto-parts manufacturing. This century, it's on its way to becoming an EV-parts giant. Kotagiri, who started at Magna in 1999 as a systems engineer before working up the ranks, is the ideal person to oversee the effort. His best asset is systems thinking—looking at the company as a whole, figuring out where the world is heading, then devising a plan to get there first. For Magna, that means an estimated $4.5 billion in EV-related product sales by 2025. To get there, the company is spending $471 million to retool existing factories for EV parts, and will build a new factory in Brampton to produce batteries for Ford's electric F-150. It also recently started production on the Fisker Ocean SUV, its first entire-vehicle assembly, and is on pace to build more than 40,000 units this year.

03. Guy Belleau

CEO, SAYONA

For spearheading a lithium empire

Belleau is a mining dynamo. He's got more than 30 years of industry experience, overseeing exploration, construction and operation at some of the largest mining companies in Canada. He's served on the board of the Quebec Mining Association and acted as chairman of the National Institute of Mining of Quebec. All of that is why Australian mining giant Sayona brought him aboard earlier this year, as the company planned to open a new mine about 550 kilometres northwest of Montreal, to produce lithium, a key element in building EV batteries. When it opens, it will be one of the few lithium mines in North America. Sayona bought it in 2021, for $46.7 million, and has spent $100 million getting it extraction-ready. If estimates are accurate, it could produce 30,000 tonnes of lithium this year. Sayona owns three other lithium sites in Quebec—the bedrock of an empire, with Belleau behind it all.

07. Chris Doornbos

CEO, E3 LITHIUM

For digging up Alberta's next big resource

For decades, Alberta has been an oil frontier, but its resource of the future might be lithium. There's a lot of the stuff hidden under the province—current estimates suggest more than 10 million metric tonnes, enough to make the province a global player in battery production. Doornbos, the CEO of E3 Lithium, is piloting a project to extract it from a site north of Calgary. A few things need to happen first: feasibility studies, partnerships, an $800-million extraction plant. So far, E3 has received $27 million from the feds to get operations underway. And the payoff could be huge. Ultimately, the site could produce 20,000 tonnes of lithium per year, starting in 2026. That's enough for 300,000 Teslas. Over the next 20 years, the project could be worth $1.1 billion, and Doornbos could become Alberta's first lithium baron.

Kotagiri by Chuk Nowak; Belleau and Doornbos courtesy of the subjects

04. John Chen

CEO, BLACKBERRY

For rescuing an iconic Canadian company

To most people, BlackBerry is synonymous with an extinct cellphone. But five years ago, as its flagship product died in the marketplace, the Waterloo company made a pivot essential to its survival. It hired Chen, who had already salvaged several flagging California tech companies, earning a reputation as the ultimate turnaround guy. Chen's suggestion was radical: BlackBerry should get rid of, well, the BlackBerry, and become a software company. Today, it's a $3-billion secure software provider with two primary businesses: providing cybersecurity for large institutions (such as banks and governments) and protecting internet-connected software, like vehicle GPS systems. BlackBerry sells security software to 24 of the top 25 EV companies and recently partnered with Chinese electric car company Hozon, providing security systems for its new futuristic sports sedan.

05. William Trainer

CEO, VICINITY MOTOR CORP.

For electrifying dirty diesel workhorses

Trainer is the CEO and founder of Vicinity Motor Corp., an electric truck and bus maker headquartered in Aldergrove, British Columbia. He helped the company secure a major contract last year when Pioneer Auto Group, a B.C. auto dealer, ordered 100 of VMC's medium-duty vehicles—the VMC 1200 Class 3, which can be used as a delivery, dump and work truck—in a deal worth $14 million. The vehicles are expensive compared to their diesel equivalents, priced at $150,000 a pop, but they're whisper-quiet, travel nearly 250 kilometres on a charge and qualify for a $40,000 zero-emission government rebate, which sweetened the deal for Pioneer. VMC currently manufactures the trucks at its assembly plant in Aldergrove, but will soon move production to the company's new 100,000-square-foot facility located a 30-minute drive away in Ferndale, Washington.

06. Fraser Atkinson

CEO, GREENPOWER

He's making commercial transport clean and green

Atkinson is the chairman and CEO of GreenPower, a Vancouver-based company that manufactures zero-emission mid-size and heavy-duty vehicles, like shuttles, cargo vans and school buses. The company, which has nearly 100 employees and a $110-million valuation, absolutely crushed it in 2022. GreenPower unveiled a new, 80,000-square-foot production facility in West Virginia, with the capacity to pump out 600 electric school buses a year. It also inked a deal to provide 1,500 cargo trucks to Workhorse, a B.C. company that specializes in "last-mile" deliveries—the final leg of a delivery journey. In Canada, tailpipe emissions from the commercial transportation sector account for a major share of the country's total carbon footprint. GreenPower is pointing the way to a solution.

08. Cara Clairman

CEO, PLUG'N DRIVE

She's spreading the EV gospel far and wide

Clairman had an epiphany in 2009. While working in sustainable development at Ontario Power Generation, she heard about the first Chevy Volt coming off the line at GM's plant in Oshawa. That's when she realized the green revolution was under way. So she founded Plug'n Drive, a not-for-profit that aims to accelerate public adoption of EVs. Plug'n Drive now has a brick-and-mortar location in Toronto, called the Electric Vehicle Discovery Centre, where visitors can test-drive an EV. As many as 10,000 people visit it each year—and surveys conducted by Plug'n Drive show that nearly 40 per cent of test drivers purchase an EV within six months. The not-for-profit has a mobile trailer equipped with informational displays that travels the country, stopping at events and roadshows to spread the gospel of EV. It also offers webinars, employee training and student-learning programs.

09. Marc Bédard

CEO, LION ELECTRIC CO.

For turning yellow school buses into green machines

Lion Electric Co., which makes zero-emission school buses and other mid-sized vehicles, had a big 2022 with some serious help from Joe Biden. Last year, POTUS announced the Clean School Bus Program, which divvied up $1 billion between 389 American school boards to electrify their fleets of school buses. Bédard—a former partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers and vice-president of a manufacturing company—leveraged his relationships with key officials in the U.S. government, ensuring that Lion, headquartered in Saint-Jérôme, Quebec, secured the lucrative contract. Lion isn't just in the bus business. It also manufactures electric trucks, which haul goods for customers including IKEA and Amazon, and Lion plans to open a $185-million battery plant in Quebec this year. And by 2026, Bedard hopes to have 1,500 electric ambulances saving lives across North America.

10. Mark Ang

CEO, GOBOLT

For cleaning up the shipping business

GoBolt founder Mark Ang has a knack for adapting his businesses on the fly. In 2017, as a commerce student at the University of Toronto, he started a clothing storage company called Second Closet. Soon after, wanting to expand the operation, he changed his concept to GoBolt, an end-to-end shipping and logistics company, which is today located in 10 major cities across North America, among them Toronto, Montreal and New York. It now has about 1,000 employees, a client list including IKEA and Structube, and a fleet of 300 delivery vehicles, 70 of which are electric. Today, the company is going as green as it can, as fast as it can. GoBolt has already invested $30 million into its EVs and associated charging infrastructure, and it plans to conduct 90 per cent of its deliveries via EVs by the end of 2023. Greenification is a lofty goal, but for Ang and company, it's just another pivot.

Chen, Trainer, Atkinson, Clairman and Bédard courtesy of the subjects; Ang by GoBolt

THE POWER LIST › TIKTOK INFLUENCERS

These Canadian creators are transforming social media, one bite-sized video at a time

PHOTOGRAPH BY MACKENZIE WALKER

01

Kris Collins

@KALLMEKRIS

THIS FORMER HAIRDRESSER IS ONE OF TIKTOK'S BIGGEST TALENTS

It was October of 2022 and Kris Collins—a.k.a. KallMeKris, a.k.a. the most popular Canadian TikTok star on the planet, with 48 million followers—hopped a flight from Vancouver to Iceland. After two and a half years of nonstop writing, producing and starring in her own quick-hit comedy skits, she longed to go somewhere where she could get away from it all. She was travelling solo but wanted company, so she signed up for one of those sightseeing services. Her tourmates were mostly older travellers who had no idea of her online alter ego. When they met in the lobby, there was a bang on the window from outside. First one fist and then several, all belonging to teenage boys whose muffled screams were unmistakable: "Kris! Krissss! Are you KallMeKris?"

To an increasingly large corner of the internet, Collins is Cameron Diaz meets Carol Burnett meets Amy Schumer, only none of those women carved out their careers while still living at mom and dad's. Before she became one of TikTok's most successful creators, she was a hairdresser, seeing clients in her salon in her parents' basement in Abbotsford, B.C. When the pandemic put her work on hold, she spent endless evenings watching TV with her family. One night, Collins called out her brother Jacob for zoning out on his phone, and he told her she should have a look at TikTok. At that point she associated the still-newish platform with viral dances, but once she learned people were using it for comedy, she was keen. Her first video used audio from the movie *Step Brothers* to joke about how adult children react when their moms ask if they want anything from the grocery store. It only got a few views, but Collins was enthused by the challenge and found that the creative outlet helped with her mental health struggles.

A few weeks in, she decided to "grow a pair" (her words) and write original material. Her first character was a Boston mom named Janet, based on the many, many moms who were her clients at the time. Then came Riley, whose tiny plastic hand Collins ordered off Amazon ($2 for a pack of four); a bro-ish brother (Chad); and a grandmother (Nona). She hit a million followers on her 24th birthday in July of 2020, and by the end of that first pandemic summer, her audience was already around two million. Still, when salons were allowed to reopen, Collins went back to work. "I just wasn't convinced that TikTok could be a real job," she says. That August, she expanded to YouTube (where monetization is based on audience engagement) and signed with an agency. She scored her first significant brand partnership with the Vancouver-based waterproof-shoe company Vessi and, toward the end of the year, decided it was time to leave the salon behind. But not until after the holidays, when her clients needed her: "These women take their hair and lashes very, very seriously."

It is this ability to clock the absurdity of everyday quirks and behaviours that makes Collins's content so popular. While a lot of the laughs on TikTok can feel alienating to anyone over 30, Collins's skits are familiar comfort food. "I think of my humour as saying the things that everyone is thinking but doesn't want to say," she explains. Her radical candour is played for laughs ("doesn't everyone look in the toilet after they're finished?"), but it's also how she talks to her audience about mental health, sometimes making her anxiety the punchline of a skit and other times just filming herself during low points.

Being relatable may be a struggle as her life becomes less and less so. She emerged from lockdown to find that people at the grocery store knew who she was. Now she can't even find anonymity in Iceland. In 2021, she bought her own house on a mountain near where she grew up, furnished with a soundproof recording studio. She attended the Streamy Awards (YouTube's Oscars) last fall. But her stories still name-check places like Costco, and Collins says her frugal upbringing steers her away from extravagance. "I am very aware that this could all go away. I want to set myself up."

TO A LARGE CORNER OF THE INTERNET, COLLINS IS CAMERON DIAZ MEETS CAROL BURNETT MEETS AMY SCHUMER

To that end, she has entered brand partnerships with Amazon Prime, Lionsgate, Lifetime TV and Google Pixel. Forbes reported her 2022 income as $4.75 million and last year she signed with A3, a talent agency out of New York that specializes in content creators. She plans to start working with an acting coach and hopes to land some roles in traditional media. In the fall, she had a part in a Nickelback video, where the concept was an impromptu concert on a college campus. Collins is a huge fan of Nickelback, though she was in diapers when the heartland rockers were at their zenith. Having her in their video (and appearing in her behind-the-scenes TikToks) is a way for the band to reach millions of Gen Zers. For Collins, it's a form of diversification as she breaks into new industries. She certainly has the talent to be her generation's Cameron Diaz. To 48 million and counting, she already is.

—Courtney Shea

02

Josh Richards

@JOSHRICHARDS

THIS ONTARIO STAR IS BREAKING INTO HOLLYWOOD—AND BIG BUSINESS

There is no arguing that 21-year-old Josh Richards has a face that belongs in front of the camera. But it's his work behind the scenes that sets him apart from his pretty-boy brethren—that and about 26 million followers, a fanbase that fell in love with his shirtless lip-synchs and pranks on friends. Richards, born in Cobourg, Ontario, has leveraged his popularity into movie roles (a first-look deal with Amazon), product lines (a dog food brand, an energy drink), a production company (in partnership with Mark Wahlberg) and a VC firm that raised $15 million in first-round funding and recently invested in technology to bring back the woolly mammoth. Based in L.A., Richards walked the red carpet at the recent Golden Globes, but not before posting a TikTok video where he pondered outfit options—while shirtless.

03. Celina Myers

@CELINASPOOKYBOO

For bone-chilling thrills and adventures in sleepwalking

Sharing a last name with one of horror's most notorious villains is fitting for the 29-year-old TikToker, who has built a devoted audience based on her preoccupation with the paranormal. "It started in her childhood home in Woodstock, Ontario, which she says was haunted after being built on land previously owned by one of the town's founding families. Her experience with the supernatural later led to a job as a ghost hunter. She launched *The Haunted Estate* podcast in 2015 and started posting on TikTok to connect with her community. She produces day-in-the-life content, often with a side of spooky (shopping for haunted dolls, the odd séance), but Myers is best known for sleepwalking videos. Footage showing her unconscious adventures (fridge raiding and flipping off cabinets) gets tens of millions of views and sparked a broader TikTok trend.

07. The Bee Family

@EHBEEFAMILY

They're an ABC sitcom come to life

Embarrassing dad, eye-rolling mom, precocious children who are now navigating teenhood—the Bee family's content has all the hallmarks of a *Modern Family* cold open, with fewer series regulars and more views. This family of four has roots that go all the way back to the Vine era. Back then, they were part of an early wave of PG vloggers promoting good, clean fun for big-brand partnerships. And while Vine is no more, the Bee family (dad Andres, mom Rosanna, daughter Gabriela and son Roberto) have transitioned successfully to YouTube and TikTok, where their following ballooned from two million to 12 million over the course of the pandemic. The kids aren't really kids anymore, but that just means fresh storylines, like a recent driving lesson that raked in more than five million views, involving a quick prayer, a hilariously nervous dad and a very relaxed daughter.

Richards by Getty Images; Myers and the Bee Family courtesy of the subjects

04. Luke Davidson

@LUKEDAVIDSON_

He's the boy next door turned comedy star

His bio reads "just a 19-year-old trying to put a smile on people's faces," which should seem like false modesty for such a popular Canadian creator on YouTube, except Luke Davidson might actually be that guy. He's got the quintessential boy-next-door vibes, complete with the occasional on-screen pimple, and truly goofy "reaction videos" in which his characters are regularly outraged by everyday occurrences. His repertoire includes bewildered movie theatre employees and snappy teachers, capturing the hilarity in daily conversations. Davidson's entertaining relatability has pushed his multi-platform audience into the millions, including 13.7 on TikTok. If the jokes have a certain dumb-dumb appeal, there's nothing basic about his hustle: he has posted new content almost every day for the last two or three years, and recently bought his dream home in Calgary.

05. Linda Dong

@YOLEENDADONG

For her bold skits and unfiltered content

Her signature messy-nerd character is a trope straight out of an '80s movie, but her content—loud, in-your-face, charmingly hammy—is about subverting Western portrayals of demure Asian women. Linda Dong, who is Vietnamese-Canadian, spent almost a decade creating comedy skits on YouTube, appearing as a more poised, polished version of herself. When she moved to TikTok in 2020, she became known as Leenda Dong and embraced a low-maintenance vibe (she looks like she actually woke up like this) and a self-deprecating sense of humour. Even though she never takes herself too seriously, the same doesn't apply to her career. Already collaborating with major brands like Disney, Amazon Prime and MAC Cosmetics, Dong signed with power agency WME (home of Matt Damon and "Weird Al" Yankovic) in November and recently relocated from Vancouver to L.A. to pursue acting roles.

06. Tate McRae

@TATEMCRAE

Her TikTok breakup ballads get billions of listens on Spotify

Tate McRae's first brush with stardom happened young, at 12 years old, when she got pulled on stage to dance during a Justin Bieber concert. Now with 4.5 million followers, she's harnessing the power of social platforms to achieve global popstar status. Last year, the video for her hit song "don't come back" became the first ever to debut on TikTok and was even shot vertically to fit the app's dimensions. Her 2020 breakup anthem "you broke me first" quickly gained traction on TikTok too, where it went mega-viral with over one billion streams on Spotify. By the next summer, the Calgary teenager was performing at Lollapalooza. Her 2022 album *i used to think i could fly* debuted at No. 13 on the Billboard chart, and she's earned nine Juno nominations in total, including a nod for Breakthrough Artist of the Year in 2021.

08. Che Durena

@CHEDURENA

For bringing stand-up to our phones

Lockdown forced stand-up comics to hit the brakes and so, like any performer with an endless arsenal of fart jokes and no one to share them with, Che Durena threw his efforts onto social media. Since then, the former scuba instructor, who got his start doing stand-up in Playa del Carmen, has attracted a global audience who love his mix of current-events commentary, brutally honest "yo mama" jokes and, yes, still a lot of body humour. He released his debut comedy album in 2020, fittingly titled *Tales From My Butthole*, which led to a gig hosting the MostAmazingTop10 YouTube channel. His sets have also been featured on Just For Laughs, SiriusXM and Comedy Central. Last year, he relocated from Toronto to New York to get back to his comedy club roots, but he won't be abandoning his online audience—more than 7.8 million followers—any time soon.

09. Jet Bent-Lee

@JETBENTLEE

For making gourmet food fun

Most Canadians know that Iron Chef Susur Lee can create edible poetry out of top-shelf ingredients, but it turns out he can do the same with greasy fast food and frozen TV dinners. Susur barely knew what TikTok was when Jet, his youngest son, approached him to collaborate on a series of food makeover challenges, which have now been viewed tens of millions of times by five million followers. Jet is the disaffected Gen Z partner who issues the challenges and edits the material after the fact, while Susur (who cooks in his home kitchen in socks!) shows a more relaxed version of his superstar self. Come for the culinary master class (that TV dinner became chicken dumplings bathed in a corn crème fraîche, topped with chives and shaved truffle). Stay for the surprisingly charming father-son dynamic and plenty of Chinese parenting wisdom, which Susur offers from behind the stove.

10. James Jones

@NOTORIOUSCREE

For shedding light on Indigenous culture through dance

One of the pandemic's earliest TikTok challenges invited users to create dances to The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights"—a fun distraction for millions of amateurs. But for Cree hoop dancer James Jones, based in Edmonton, it was the beginning of a new career. Over two million people watched the former *So You Think You Can Dance Canada* contestant's mesmerizing performance with half a dozen giant hoops. He's earned shoutouts in *Vogue*, a giant billboard in Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square and a massive following that currently totals 3.8 million. A steady stream of dance posts (sometimes to pop songs, mostly to Indigenous artists like Apsáalooke rapper Supaman) is broken up with quick hits on Indigenous history ("a few facts about The Indian Act"), and comedic cultural commentary, like a reaction video called "When Natives see the Pope receiving a headdress he didn't earn."

Davidson, Durena and Jones courtesy of the subjects; Dong by Mark Marilla; McRae by Getty Images; Bent-Lee by Taran Sodhi

Habitat

THE COUNTRY'S MOST CREATIVE LIVING SPACES

PHOTOGRAPH BY **REVELATEUR STUDIO**

MODERNE LIVING

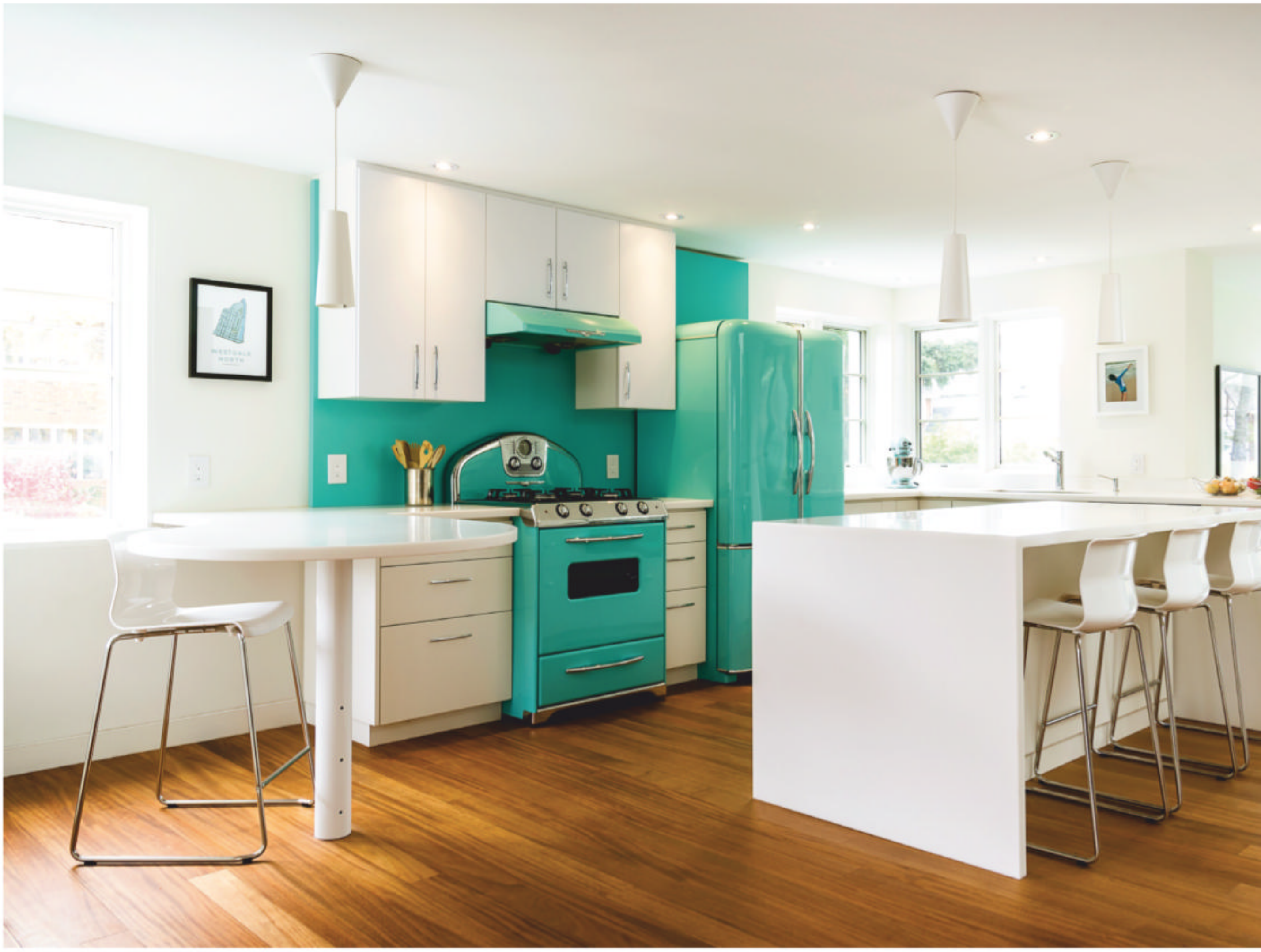
This couple's renovations brought their playful Hamilton home into the 21st century

By Isabel B. Slone

IN 2013, Tina Fetner and her husband, Lane Dunlop, were visiting a friend in the leafy Westdale neighbourhood of Hamilton, Ontario, when they stumbled across a for-sale sign on the lawn of a space-age-looking mid-century stucco bungalow. Hambly House—named for its first owner—was built in 1939, one of four remaining art moderne buildings in the Hamilton area attributed to designer Edward Glass. (Art moderne, a cousin of art deco, is known for its curves and horizontal lines.) Fetner, a sociology professor at McMaster University, and Dunlop, a retired music executive, discovered that the house had been sitting empty for a year in a state of shambolic disrepair. But its whimsical character attracted them, even though they weren't looking for a new home. "The house just fits our personality," says Fetner. "It's a little bit sassy, just like us."

The previous owner had attempted to preserve the home's character during the restoration process, but their commitment to using historically accurate building methods had left the home unlivable. Single-glazed windows let in a draft, and the ivy and shrubs encasing the house had caused extensive water damage to the outside walls. The roots of the maple tree in

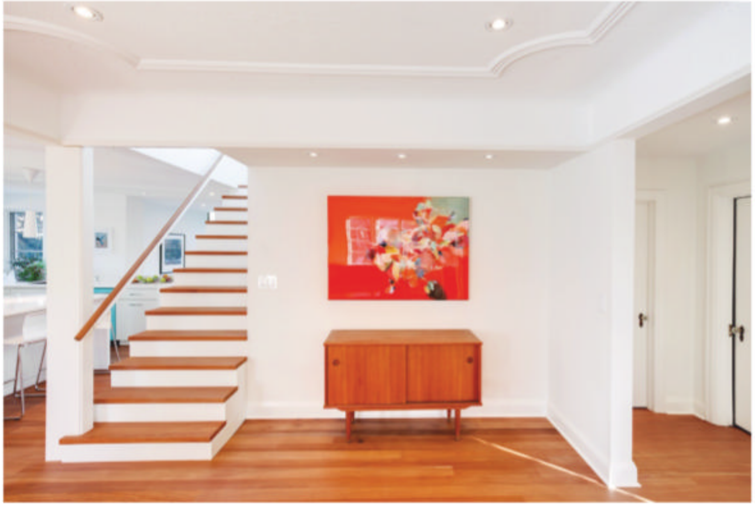
CHANCE ENCOUNTER The couple spotted the home while visiting friends who lived nearby



COLOURFUL TOUCHES The kitchen appliances in Hambly House are a whimsical shade of robin's-egg blue

the backyard were invading the foundation, and according to Dunlop, "If you pressed your finger against the basement wall, water would seep out." Given the home's condition, Fetner and Dunlop were able to purchase the architectural gem in 2013 for the bargain-basement price of $375,000.

With a footprint of less than 1,000 square feet, the three-bedroom home needed to be updated for modern living. The kitchen was small and cramped, like the galley of a ship, with jutting, angled cupboards. The original pale-green tiles and fixtures in the bathroom had been overtaken by rust and needed to be replaced. To honour the home's character, Fetner and Dunlop hired architect and family friend David Premi



LET THE SUN SHINE IN The staircase was designed to flood the first floor with natural light

Kitchen and porthole by Scott Annandale; others by Revelateur Studio

ENTER THE WARDROBE Renovations revealed a porthole window in the hall closet

MID-CENTURY MAGIC The living room still has a rose-and-thorn plaster ceiling

BUNGALOW NO MORE The newly added second floor has expansive windows

The renovations brought the house into the modern era while painstakingly preserving its vintage character

from DPAI Architecture, embarking on a two-year renovation aimed at bringing the house into the modern era while painstakingly preserving its vintage character.

Fetner and Dunlop ensured that some of the house's original details remain intact. There's a plaster ceiling in the downstairs living room that resembles pressed tin, with rose-and-thorn detailing. Built-in bookshelves line the room's walls, where the couple display their art collection, which includes a piece by Vancouver artist Christine Breakell-Lee. They've even restored the basement to its original state, designed to look like a log cabin with faux wood knots and trompe l'oeil bird's nests built into the moulded plaster walls.

In the front entryway, Fetner and Dunlop took out a hall closet to reveal a circular porthole window that would have been hidden by coats. They also removed several walls to transform the kitchen and living room into an open-concept space that stretches from the front hallway to the back of the house, where they added a 150-square-foot dining room with floor-to-ceiling windows. The mid-century-style appliances by Elmira Stove Works are a kitschy robin's-egg blue, giving the kitchen a bright and playful air.

The home was originally a bungalow, but the couple added a second storey in the form of an atrium with curved glass that had to be specially manufactured in Pennsylvania and crane-lifted atop the home. "We could see the concerned, quizzical look on our neighbours' faces wondering what we were doing," says Dunlop. The extra floor, which is flooded with natural light, has a new primary bedroom, an upstairs living room and an outdoor terrace.

"When you're outside on the deck, it's like being on the upper deck of a small boat," says Dunlop. He can usually be found relaxing in a nook by the curved glass, where the sightline from the terrace rests directly on top of the trees. From there, he can mark what time of day it is by the passage of regular dog walkers or joggers. "Even though you're inside, you really feel like part of the neighbourhood." ■

Culture

WHAT TO SEE, HEAR AND READ RIGHT NOW

CARDS OF FATE

Tarot readings are the latest social-media craze—and a new way to foster introspection and connection

By Michelle Cyca

“SO, THE VERY FIRST THING IS KIND OF A KICK IN THE ASS,” says Lori Simeunovic, who goes by Tarot Lori professionally, as she draws the Four of Cups. We’ve connected on a Sunday morning over Zoom to talk about her 35-year career in tarot, and when she offers to read for me, I can’t pass up the opportunity. The cups, she explains, represent love and abundance, but the worried figure on the card looks distracted. “This card is asking you to be more present. I call this a ‘cranky grandpa card’ because in my head, it has this old-man voice like Clint Eastwood,” she says, radiating Old Hollywood glamour with her Corvette-red lipstick and platinum-blonde hair in front of a shelf of crystals. I’d classify myself as tarot-agnostic, but I find myself leaning closer and closer to the screen as she flips through her well-worn deck of Rider-Waite-Smith cards.

Once a patchouli-scented pastime, tarot is now decidedly chic

Tarot seems to be everywhere lately: on *The White Lotus*, where a spacey heiress played by Jennifer Coolidge receives an ominous reading; in the purse of actress Anya Taylor-Joy, who told British *Vogue* she loves to pull the cards out at parties; in the creations of Montreal jewellery design studio Sofia Zakia, whose tarot collection features gold-and-diamond card pendants. Simeunovic, who started out doing readings in nail salons and coffee shops, has been swept up in the craze: she just signed a two-book deal with HarperCollins to write about rituals and tarot. What was once a patchouli-scented pastime, discoverable through your witchy aunt or local crystal shop, is now decidedly chic and increasingly ubiquitous.

Tarot cards have been a party staple since the late medieval era. Fifteenth-century Italians played parlour games with their decks, which are similar to modern playing cards: four suits, each with cards numbered one to 10, followed by four face cards. In tarot, these 56 cards are called the minor arcana, divided into swords, cups, pentacles and wands. Then there are the 22 cards of the major arcana, many of which are familiar even if you’ve never picked up a deck: the Devil, the Lovers, the Chariot. By the 19th century, the cards had become associated with divination and fortune-telling, largely after French occultist Éliphas Lévi helped popularize their esoteric symbolism.

Today, tarot is a popular tool for self-reflection and introspection, not unlike therapy. For someone like me, who finds the thought of talking about my feelings and anxieties excruciating, the open-ended nature of a tarot reading offers a comfortingly indirect approach. “It’s like a conversation with your soul, and I’m the interpreter,” says Simeunovic. “I also say that it’s like life coaching the crap out of yourself.” When my attention snagged on the Four of Cups, a figure who is always scanning the horizon for what’s missing, I felt my own worries represented.

As with pretty much every other aspect of our lives, the tarot business was transformed by the pandemic. Simeunovic says that COVID-19 exploded her reach as people started scheduling readings on Zoom, sometimes even for first dates. She believes that people became more attracted to tarot, astrology and other forms of “woo woo,” as she puts it, as a way to combat the pandemic’s isolating effect. The striking imagery and open interpretation of the cards also make them ideal for social-media algorithms; the #tarot hashtag has over 45 billion views on TikTok.

Maybe that’s why tarot is flourishing among millennials and Gen Z, whose members are also much less likely to belong to organized religions than their elders. Several of my friends, while telling me about their tarot practices, mentioned that they used to be religious. “Tarot and other mystical practices fill that void,” says Keagan Perlette, a Quebec City writer who publishes a newsletter on tarot cards and astrology. “Why are we here? What am I doing? You can ask those questions without tying them into the dogma of religion, which can feel restrictive or unaccepting.”

Whether you think tarot is a fun party trick or a direct line to the cosmos, it can be an effective way to slice through the Gordian knot of your own tangled thoughts. “These are just pieces of paper,” Simeunovic says, but there’s pleasure to be found in listening. “When you’re shuffling your tarot deck, you’re acknowledging that there’s some force outside you that you can’t see and you can’t control,” says Perlette. “Whether you call it God, or the universe, or physics—it’s something you can’t touch, but it’s going to come and give you a message.” ■

Photograph by iStock

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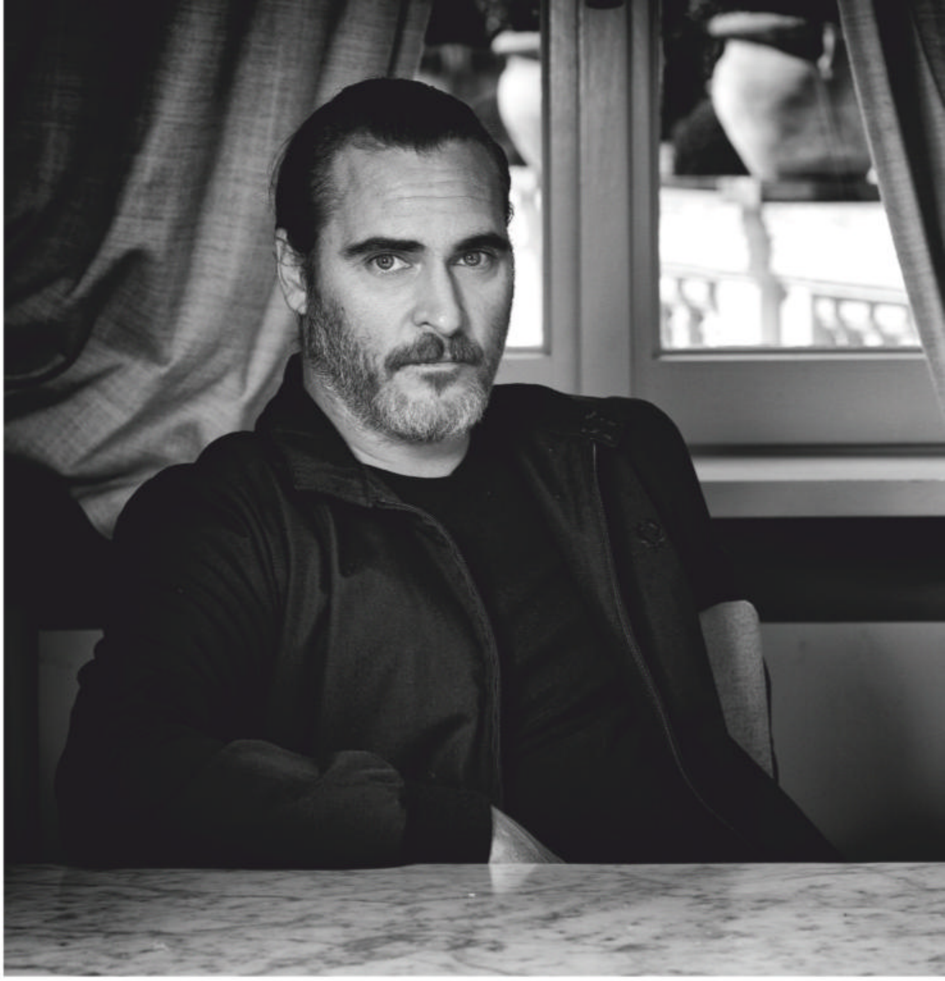


FILM

A TIME-BENDING THRILLER

BEAU IS AFRAID

A24

April 21

AMERICAN WRITER AND DIRECTOR Ari Aster scared our pants off with *Hereditary* and *Midsommar*, seamlessly blending psychological horror with surrealist comedy. In *Beau Is Afraid*, his fellow artistic eccentric Joaquin Phoenix plays the titular character, a paranoid, agoraphobic entrepreneur facing his fears to get home to his overbearing mother (played by Patti LuPone). The movie was shot in and around Montreal, and Beau seemingly travels through space and time, in and out of various worlds—or maybe the whole thing's a paranoid delusion. As always, Aster's plots and messages are top secret, totally trippy and endlessly interpretable long after you've left the theatre.

ART

A SHOW THAT BARES IT ALL

WOLFGANG TILLMANS:
TO LOOK WITHOUT FEAR

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

April 7 to October 1

TWO NUDE FRIENDS IN A TREE, Frank Ocean in the shower, a toucan enjoying his lunch: these are all images from German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans's massive exhibition at Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario. Organized by the Museum of Modern Art, *To look without fear* features over 300 of Tillmans's creations—his famously erotic photographs, of course, but also videos and a multimedia installation. These works are displayed somewhat chronologically to showcase his artistic evolution alongside the social and political movements he advocates for, including LGBTQ+ causes and AIDS awareness. In the spirit of his major shows, some images on display are from his personal collection of prints, and they're pinned or taped to gallery walls to mimic the gritty, intimate feeling of a casual dorm-room collage. But don't be fooled: Tillmans himself arrived in March to meticulously oversee every photo's placement. Catch him in person at the free opening ceremony on April 12.

Phoenix by Getty Images; Ocean: Wolfgang Tillmans, "Frank, in the shower, 2015," courtesy of the artist, David Zwirner New York/Hong Kong, Galerie Buchholz Berlin/Cologne, and Maureen Paley, London

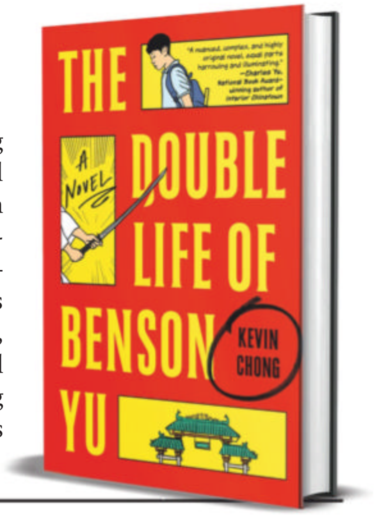
BOOK

A META READ

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF BENSON YU

Kevin Chong

April 18


THE DOUBLE LIFE OF BENSON YU
A Novel
KEVIN CHONG
"A nuanced, complex, and highly original novel, equal parts harrowing and illuminating." —Charles Yu, National Book Award-winning author of Interior Chinatown

AUTHOR KEVIN CHONG spins a meta yarn starring Benson Yu, a comic book creator writing a novel about his childhood in Vancouver's Chinatown in the 1980s. Chong's new novel is artfully surrealist, à la *Everything Everywhere All at Once*—Yu's odd neighbour, for example, believes he's a reincarnated medieval samurai. Meanwhile, competing narratives of Yu's written versus actual story collide and overlap. Probing gut-wrenching themes of child abuse and trauma, Chong provides a thoughtful twist on the coming-of-age genre.

ART

AN ARTIST'S REFLECTIONS

THE CHILDREN HAVE TO HEAR ANOTHER STORY

Vancouver Art Gallery

April 7 to August 7

IN HER NINE DECADES, Abenaki American-Canadian artist Alanis Obomsawin has worked as a singer, songwriter, educator, filmmaker and producer. *Another Story* is a vast and comprehensive retrospective of her portfolio, including a dozen films she made with the National Film Board. *Richard Cardinal*, for example, is the harrowing story of a Métis boy's suicide following a childhood in foster care. Interspersed throughout the exhibition are messages surrounding social justice and ecology. It's a fascinating retrospective on the changing political landscape in which Obomsawin has forged her own model of Indigenous cinema.

THEATRE

SOMETHING WICKED

MACBETH

Canadian Opera Company

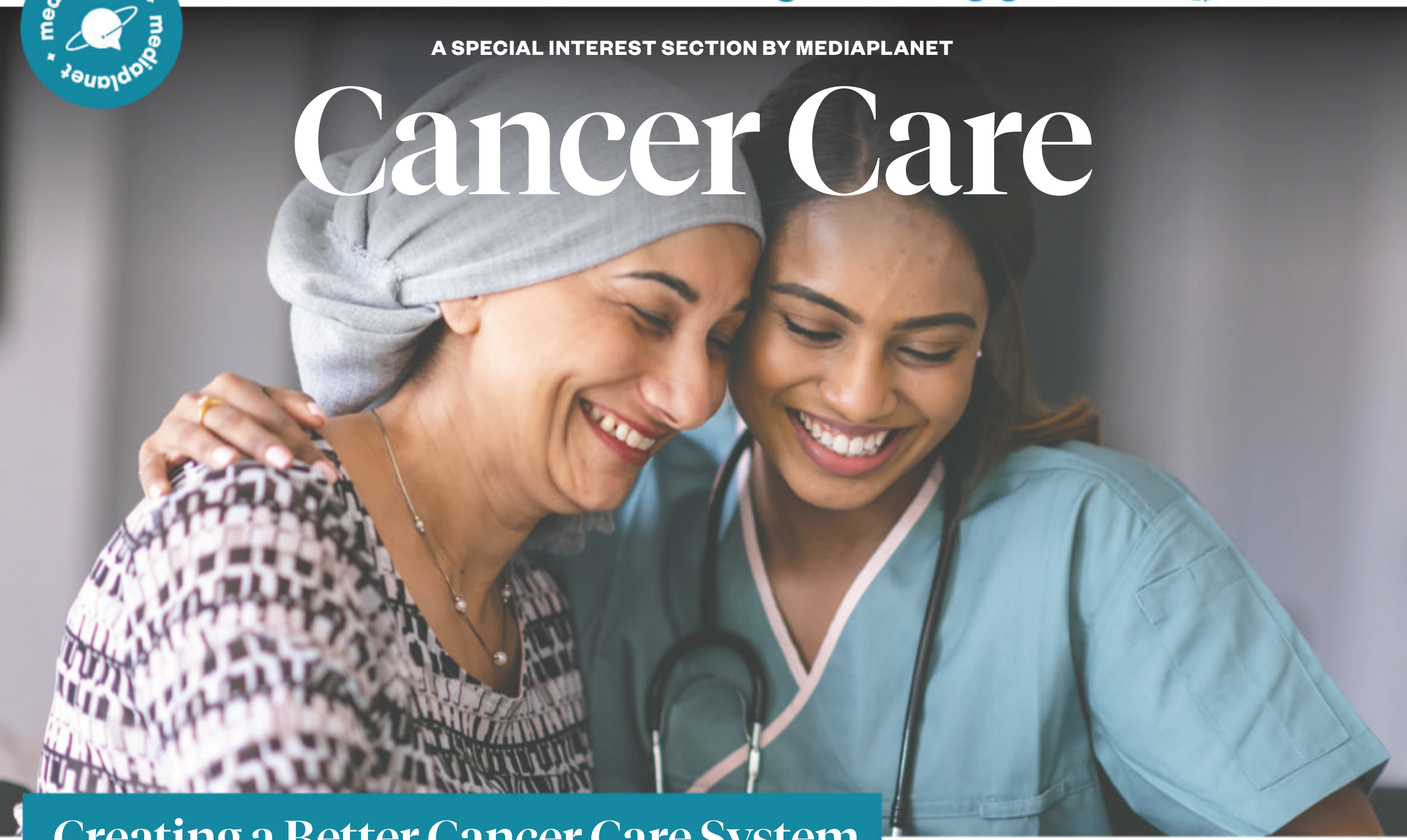
April 28 to May 20

VERDI'S ADAPTATION of the so-called Scottish play—don't say the name—sets the classic Shakespearean story to a dramatic score fit for a king. Baritone bad boy Quinn Kelsey makes for a brooding Macbeth, while his guilt-ridden wife is played by Canadian opera star Sondra Radvanovsky. Look down to the orchestra for a glimpse at Italian conductor Speranza Scappucci, who made history last year as the first Italian woman to conduct at La Scala in Milan. She's leaving her mark on a male-dominated field, and Canadian opera audiences will eagerly welcome her return to Toronto. *—Rosemary Counter*

Obomsawin courtesy of the subject and the National Film Board of Canada; *Macbeth* by Ken Howard

A SPECIAL INTEREST SECTION BY MEDIAPLANET

Cancer Care



Creating a Better Cancer Care System Starts with Listening to Patients

Canada's cancer care system is already strained, yet faces escalating demand. Together, we must advocate for meaningful change to the system.

Andrea Seale, CEO, Canadian Cancer Society

A recent Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) survey of patients and caregivers revealed that three years into the pandemic, access to cancer care in Canada remains inconsistent and vital needs aren't always being met. Among the concerns expressed were the impact of cancelled or postponed appointments, low confidence in receiving timely care for cancer-related emergencies, and the financial burden of cancer.

Addressing an escalating need

Addressing these challenges to our strained cancer care system has never been more important. In late 2022, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, the CCS released a special report on cancer prevalence, which found that over 1.5 million people in Canada are living with or beyond cancer — a number that has risen steadily over the last decade and that'll continue to rise as our population ages and grows.

The escalating need for cancer care doesn't end there. Based on data from the Canadian Cancer Registry, we know that disruptions to cancer care during the pandemic have led to delayed cancer diagnoses and fewer cases diagnosed. In 2020, there were 6.1 per cent fewer new cancer cases compared to the annual average for 2015 to 2019, indicating a significant number of undetected cancer cases that will require treatment and care in the months and years ahead.

Sparking transformative change

Change is urgently needed. And as decision-makers shape the cancer care system of the future, they have a responsibility to ensure not only that the system will have capacity to meet increasing demands, but also that it will meet the unique and specific needs of people with cancer.

How can those of us outside the cancer care system help spark this kind of transformative change? We can speak up. Person-centred cancer care is only possible when the perspectives and experiences of people affected by cancer are at the forefront of every decision. People whose lives have been touched by cancer can share their stories with decision-makers through platforms like the CCS's Get Better card-writing tool and organizations can amplify their voices and lead strong calls for action.

Together, we can help Canada's cancer care system work for everyone who needs it. ■

Andrea Seale
CEO,
Canadian
Cancer Society

To learn more, visit **cancer.ca**.

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Canada Is Home to One of the Top 5 Cancer Research Centres in the World

As a world-class research institution Princess Margaret Cancer Centre attracts top global research talent and funding.

Anne Papmehl

TRANSFORMING
CARE AND THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Dr. Keith Stewart
Director,
Princess Margaret Cancer Centre
& Vice President, Cancer,
University Health Network

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, is one of the top 5 cancer research centres in the world. One area where The Princess Margaret's leadership is having a major impact is in multiple myeloma research and care.

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of the bone marrow caused by the proliferation of abnormal plasma cells. In 2022, an estimated 4,000 Canadians were diagnosed with multiple myeloma, an increasingly treatable, but still incurable blood cancer for many.

While a cure is elusive, survival outcomes for multiple myeloma have improved substantially over the past two decades thanks to the development of new therapeutics. The Princess Margaret has been at the forefront of all of them.

With one of the largest multiple myeloma programs worldwide, The Princess Margaret conducts more than 40 myeloma clinical trials and 300 stem cell transplants for myeloma patients annually. "Fourteen new myeloma drugs have been approved by regulators over the last 20 years and with each one there's an improvement in safety and disease survival," says Dr. Keith Stewart, Director of Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, and Vice President, Cancer at University Health Network (UHN) in Toronto.

The Princess Margaret — a magnet for global talent

Dr. Stewart has dedicated his career to myeloma research and care since he started his career at UHN in the early 1990s. Since then, he has held senior leadership positions at the Mayo Clinic in the U.S., and recently returned to Canada to direct The Princess Margaret. "The opportunity to lead one of the world's top cancer centres and hopefully advance it and keep it moving forward, was too attractive to pass up at this stage of my career," says Dr. Stewart, who is currently leading a project to test whether novel, small-cell molecule drugs can safely and effectively treat myeloma.

Other current myeloma research initiatives at The Princess Margaret include studies with antibody-based NK cells with potential to kill myeloma cells led by Dr. Rodger Tiedemann; improving multiple myeloma surveillance using plasma whole gene sequencing led by Drs. Trevor Pugh, and Suzanne Trudel; and continued immunotherapy research on T-cell therapeutics building on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Tak Mak, who was the first to clone the T-cell receptor in 1984. "His breakthrough advanced the development of the immunotherapy work he is continuing today," says Dr. Stewart.

The Princess Margaret's global team of clinicians and scientists includes fellows from around the world who come to The Princess Margaret to train as myeloma specialists. "We truly have a very global perspective. This year for example fellows from Brazil, Colombia, India and Israel will rotate through the lab or clinical practice," says Dr. Stewart.

Recent donation a testament to The Princess Margaret's prominence and skill in cancer research field

As rewarding as these developments have been, Dr. Stewart warns we're not there yet. "For most people with myeloma, it's still a chronic relapsing disease which is why we need to focus on more effective and less toxic therapies," says Dr. Stewart.

Thanks to a recent $9.2 million donation from the Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation, researchers at The Princess Margaret can continue to do just that. "This donation is the first major investment the Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation has made in Canada," says Dr. Stewart, adding: "I think that attracting support from a very large U.S.-based foundation really speaks to our prominence in the field and our position as one of the top 5 cancer research centres in the world." ■

Please visit **thepmcf.ca** to learn more and to support The Princess Margaret.

This article was **sponsored by The Princess Margaret**.

The Princess Margaret UHN

Why Society Must Embrace the Idea of "Dying a Good Death"

Pancreatic Cancer Canada works year-round to broaden conversations around death and the importance of palliative care.

Sonya Friesen

In a society that embraces youth, there's very little discussion around life's most inevitable feature, death. However, for the 7,000 Canadians diagnosed with pancreatic cancer each year, death is an all-too-real topic of conversation. Ninety per cent of those diagnosed will die, meaning the survival rate is a mere 10 per cent — a stat that's seen very little improvement over the years.

"People fear death, but when fear leads to denial, we miss the opportunity to have meaningful conversations on the way we want the end of our lives to unfold," says Michelle Capobianco, CEO of Pancreatic Cancer Canada. An organization dedicated to advocating for people affected by a disease likened to a death sentence, Pancreatic Cancer Canada not only aims to raise awareness and fund research within the space but also shoulders the difficult duty of sparking conversation around what it means to be death-positive. "We have a great responsibility to help the 90 per cent of patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer to die a good death," says Capobianco.

> People fear death, but when fear leads to denial, we miss the opportunity to have meaningful conversations on the way we want the end of our lives to unfold.

Understanding palliative care

In its early stages, symptoms of pancreatic cancer aren't often obvious. Most patients are diagnosed after the cancer has already metastasized, making it particularly lethal. Palliative care is a critical part of pancreatic cancer treatment, as it helps patients live out the rest of their life comfortably. "Palliative care focuses on reducing suffering, improving quality of life for people with life-limited illness," explains Capobianco.

Unfortunately, there continues to be educational gaps within the health care system itself, impacting whether patients ever receive a palliative care referral. While attitudinal shifts take time, there's an increasing need for Canadians to advocate for death-positive perspectives. "No matter what 'dying a good death' means to someone, everyone has that right, free of judgment and with the support they need," says Capobianco. "Being death-positive is saying we want to participate in broader conversations around death."

Canadians can support those suffering from pancreatic cancer by not only embracing a societal acceptance of death but by having an openness to the tough conversations that ultimately allow those suffering the chance to feel supported in dying a good death. ■

Michelle Capobianco
CEO,
Pancreatic Cancer Canada

To learn more visit **pancreaticcancercanada.ca**.

This article was **sponsored by Pancreatic Cancer Canada**.

PANCREATIC CANCER CANADA

How Kidney Cancer Canada Can Help Patients, Caregivers, and Doctors

Kidney Cancer Canada is helping patients, caregivers, and health care professionals through support, education, and advocacy.

Kidney cancer is a unique and often silent disease with no apparent symptoms until it's advanced or found incidentally by ultrasound or scan. Symptoms may include flank or back pain, a lump or a thickening, and blood in the urine. When diagnosed at a more advanced stage, options for treatment can be challenging.

Understanding the diagnostic journey

The diagnosis of a kidney mass doesn't necessarily mean that it's kidney cancer. It's possible that the mass is a benign growth. First, a urologist would see the patient. A biopsy would determine the type, stage, and grade of the mass and the next steps required. If the tumour is relatively small and localized (early stage), active surveillance with close monitoring and regular diagnostic tests, or surgery to completely remove the tumour, are the most common treatments. There are different options available for surgery methods and minimally invasive treatment, such as radiofrequency ablation or cryoablation, depending on the size, position, and complexity of the tumour.

When the cancer is advanced, systemic treatment would be prescribed and monitored by an oncologist and could be used in conjunction with surgery or radiation therapy. Immunotherapy offers excellent treatment options. Clinical trials offer access to new research treatments and expert medical care.

Resources and support are available

The good news is that patients with kidney cancer today are living and thriving. It's vital for Canadians diagnosed with or caring for someone with kidney cancer to educate themselves about the disease and treatment options so they can make the best possible decisions with their doctor for their individual situation.

Kidney Cancer Canada can help! We're a national community of patients, caregivers, and health care professionals who work together to provide every Canadian touched by kidney cancer with support, information, education, and advocacy. Our website has a wealth of information, including our Video Knowledge Library presented by kidney cancer specialists from across Canada.

Resources are available on nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, stress management, and one-to-one peer support, and our Coffee Chats offer a safe environment for patients and caregivers to talk, share experiences, and discuss all topics. ■

This article was **sponsored by Kidney Cancer Canada**.

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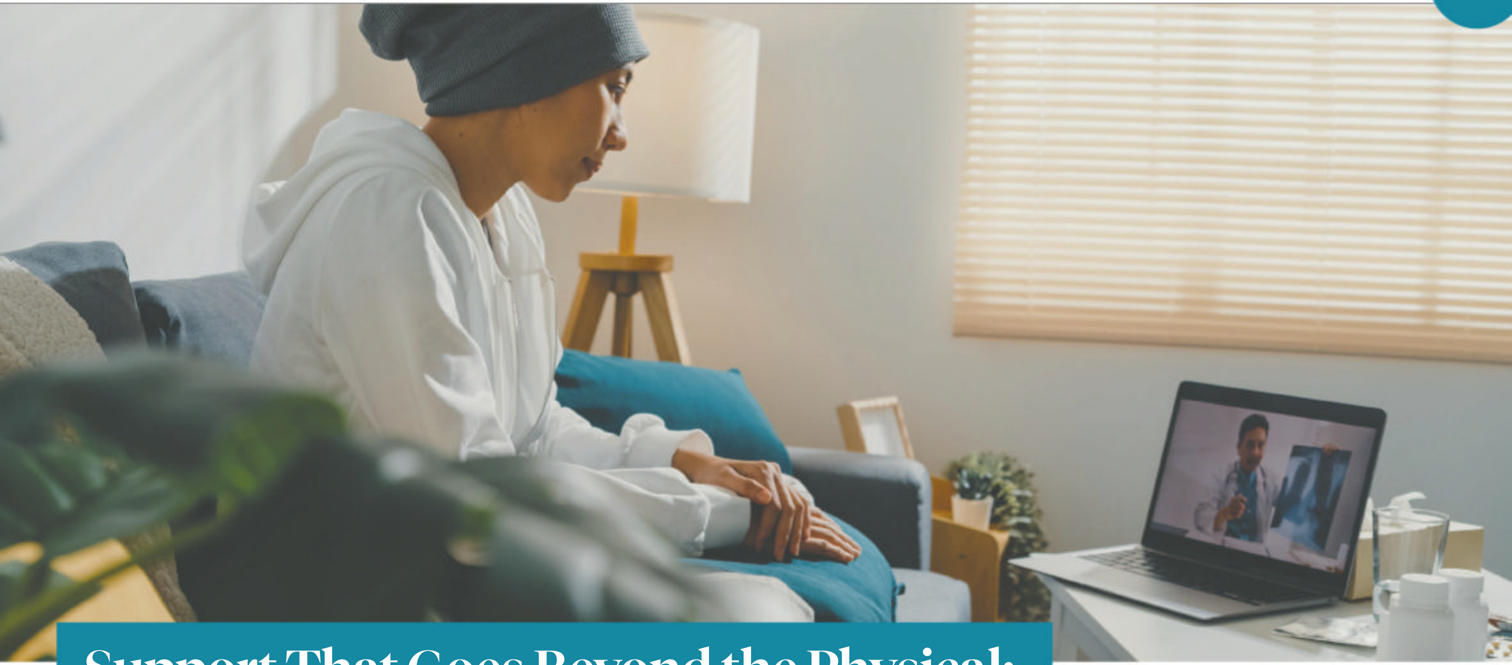

Support That Goes Beyond the Physical: Cancer's Impact on Mental Health

A virtual care network seeks to combine physical and mental health supports creating a comprehensive care approach for cancer patients and their families.

Sonya Friesen

In Canada, cancer remains the leading cause of death. Forty per cent of Canadians will be diagnosed with some form of the disease in their lifetime and one in four will die from it. Cancer has become one of humanity's most notorious health threats, and as diagnoses continue to grow, finding ways to combat the symptoms that come along with a cancer diagnosis is paramount.

The complexities of care

The complexities of a cancer diagnosis go far beyond the physical manifestations. The mental health impacts that can develop throughout the cancer journey can be just as disruptive as the disease itself, both for the individual suffering and their loved ones. At its core, cancer can be an incredibly isolating experience. From the anxiety that comes with a diagnosis to the depression that can be present throughout treatment, the mental health impacts of the disease can be some of the most difficult to navigate. Finding support that not only considers the physical effects but also the invisible ones has never been more important.

For more than 15 years, Carepath has worked to provide comprehensive and personalized support for Canadians dealing with illnesses or health crises — and it all began after recognizing the gaps in the system when it came to many Canadians' cancer experiences. Now a leader in virtual care, the organization helps to guide members as they navigate the health care system, championing patient advocacy and working with them from initial diagnosis through to resolution. Encompassing everything from chronic health conditions through to mental health concerns, Carepath's support has grown from its foundational Cancer Assistance program to encompass all types of health conditions and associated issues, but cancer continues to be an integral focus.

Cultivating a healing environment

For those going through a cancer diagnosis, Carepath is especially cognizant of the many elements and struggles that the experience entails, both physical and mental. The organization's mental health program was created with this in mind. While the program supports those experiencing mental health struggles not associated with physical health conditions, it also considers the need for support targeted at those experiencing mental health impacts resulting from a cancer diagnosis. Coupled with its flagship Cancer Assistance program, Carepath's virtual care network is uniquely positioned to provide comprehensive support for patients, considering specific needs and meeting an individual wherever they may be throughout each stage of their journey.

Cancer isn't an individual experience. A cancer diagnosis directly impacts a family unit and the mental health effects can transcend beyond the patient. Having support that takes this into account, and offering help not only for the individual experiencing the disease but also for the loved ones who walk alongside them during the journey, is vital in creating an environment that's conducive to healing. Designed to promote prevention and early intervention, Carepath's mental health program understands the very present mental health risks for a patient's loved ones and offers customized support for individuals, couples, and families.

The benefits of reaching out

Accessing support shouldn't be an added worry for anyone going through a health crisis. Carepath is available as a group benefit and has worked with employers across the country to create customized plans for over a million Canadians. Through the organization's mental health support, individuals can lean on counselling services. Members experiencing cancer can also receive personalized disease-focused support, access to the service's Nurse Case Managers, and insights from the oncology Medical Advisory Board, which is made up of some of Canada's most accomplished cancer care specialists. ■

For more information about Carepath and the services available, or to inquire about making the virtual network a part of your employee benefits package, visit **carepath.ca**.

This article was **sponsored by Carepath**.

Carepath DigitalHealth by Shoppers

Improving Early Breast Cancer Detection Through Real-world Evidence

Syantra and Calian on a mission to increase access to breast cancer screening in Canada.

When it comes to breast cancer, early detection means better outcomes. And with approximately 29,000 new breast cancer diagnoses in Canada last year,[1] opportunities for early detection are critical.

Syantra Inc. is a precision medicine company changing the way cancer is detected and treated. Its flagship product, **SYANTRA DX™ BREAST CANCER**, is a non-invasive and high-performance blood test for the detection of breast cancer at the earliest stages. Syantra's platform technology measures gene expression biomarkers from whole blood and uses algorithms, developed with machine learning, to identify a signal for breast cancer with an overall accuracy of 92 per cent.[2]

THE SYANTRA DX™ BREAST CANCER blood test launched nationally in 2022 through a partnership with Calian® Group Ltd. Syantra's collaboration with Calian means more than an extensive healthcare provider network. Calian enables efficient access to test administration and data collection for generating real-world evidence (RWE) through access to a world-class patient support program and leveraging Calian® Nexi™, a proprietary enterprise resource management platform while Syantra interprets the data collected and test results. RWE studies support market access initiatives to understand how **SYANTRA DX™ BREAST CANCER** can augment current screening pathways.

"Our collaboration with Calian is helping Syantra collect very valuable patient data in Canada, and it will also expand to the USA and Europe. Together, we are enhancing the breast cancer detection toolkit," says Tina Rinker, Ph.D., Syantra co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer.

"We're proud that Nexi™ is supporting advancements in cancer research and enabling Canadians to navigate the healthcare system — from rural communities to urban city centres," adds Kaytlin Sadler, VP Patient Solutions at Calian.

Visit **syantra.com** to learn more.

This article was **sponsored by Syantra Inc. and Calian Group**.

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[1] Canadian Cancer Society. Breast cancer statistics. May 2022 – https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/breast/statistics

[2] Syantra DX™ Breast Cancer has been evaluated in clinical studies for women between the ages of 25 to 80. The data infers an accuracy of 92.2% for women between 25 to 80, See the European Journal of Cancer for details on IDBC clinical study interim data. https://www.ejcancer.com/article/S0959-8049(22)01365-X/fulltext and 98.5% for women under 50.

Advancements in HPV Screening Could Eradicate Cervical Cancer in Our Lifetime

Regular cervical screening can greatly reduce the chances of cervical cancer.

D.F. McCourt

Cervical cancer kills hundreds of Canadian women every year. However, with the right approach, we could bring that number down to virtually zero.

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV, the most common sexually transmitted infection in Canada. And HPV is both vaccine-preventable and treatable. "Cervical cancer is preventable," emphasizes Dr. Kathleen Decker, a scientist with the Research Institute in Oncology and Hematology at CancerCare Manitoba. "There are three key strategies used to greatly reduce chances of cervical cancer: immunization using the HPV vaccine, screening, and treating women who have an abnormal screening test."

Better screening means earlier diagnosis

Modern cervical cancer screening is more robust than the Pap test most people are familiar with. Advances in screening technology have made it possible to test for high-risk HPV strains directly. "HPV testing and HPV immunization have been valuable innovations in the prevention, early detection, and management of the precursors of cervical cancers," says Dr. Nathan Roth of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Toronto.

These advances are particularly important because detecting cervical cancer or precancer at the earliest stages is one of the biggest predictors of survival. "Earlier detection has had a major impact on the cervical cancer death rate in Canada and other countries with widespread cervical cancer screening programs," says Leah Smith, Senior Manager of Surveillance at the Canadian Cancer Society. "In Canada, the cervical cancer death rate has dropped at least 70 per cent since the 1970s."

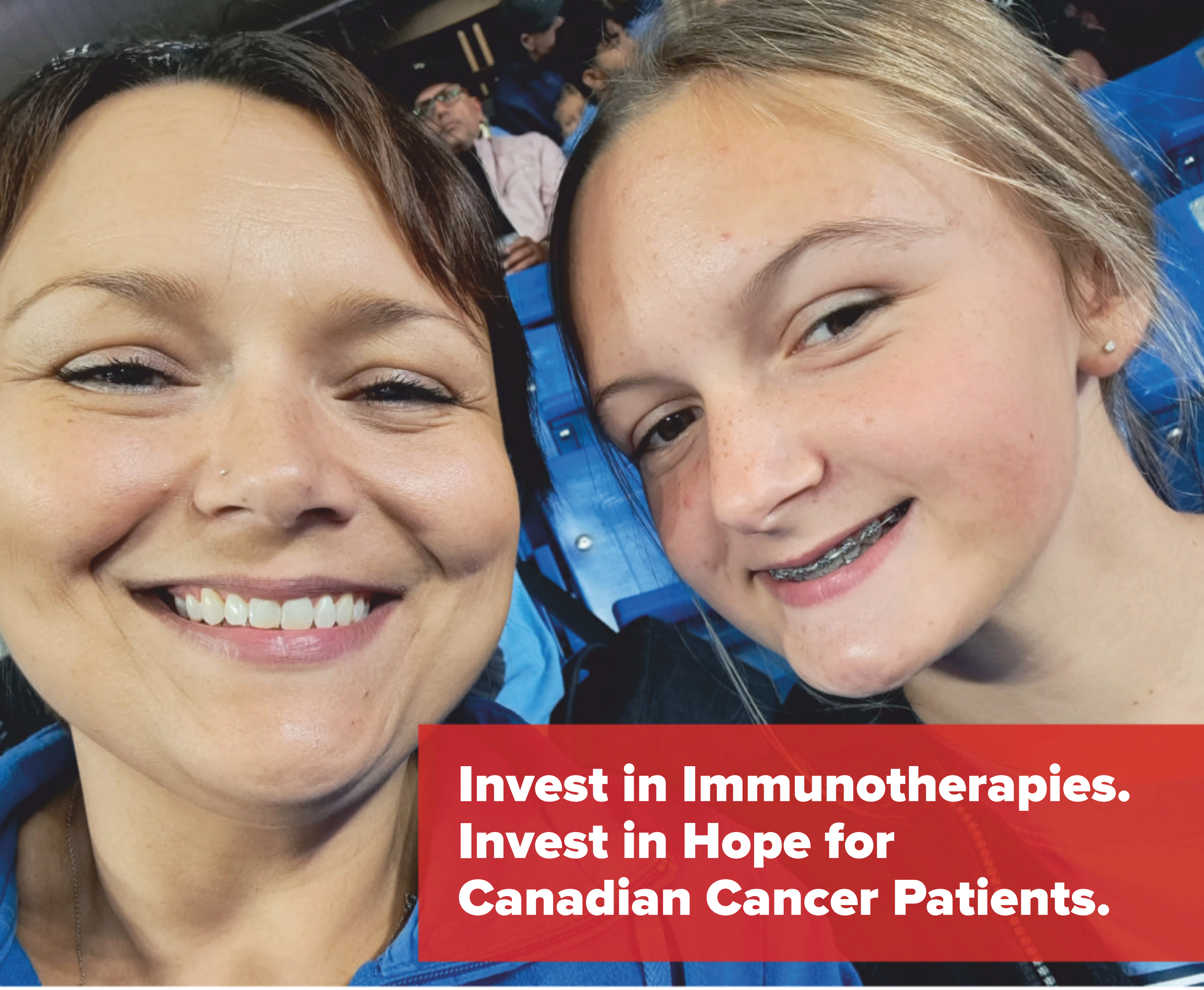
Further steps against cancer

If we continue to build upon this success, cervical cancer could potentially go the way of polio and smallpox. "We stand on the edge of a historic achievement," says Dr. Jennifer Blake, Professor of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

To protect yourself against cancer, talk to your health care provider. If you are already immunized, ask if there's a more comprehensive cervical screening option than what you currently receive. It could save your life.

Visit **lifelabs.com** to learn more.

This article was **sponsored by LifeLabs.**


Invest in Immunotherapies.
Invest in Hope for
Canadian Cancer Patients.

Camille Leahy was out of treatment options for her acute lymphoblastic leukemia when she was offered a novel CAR T-cell immunotherapy clinical trial which ultimately saved her life.

BioCanRx is the only not-for-profit network composed of academic health centres, scientists, clinicians, trainees and partners across the country connecting the required expertise and infrastructure to fast-track breakthrough immunotherapies from the lab to clinical trials to benefit Canadian cancer patients.

Our vision is to turn all cancers into curable diseases. By filling critical capacity gaps to conduct world class translational cancer research, BioCanRx has enabled 12 novel immunotherapy trials and has the support of more than 50 cancer charities and 38 private sector companies.

biocanrx.com

BioCanRx
Canada's Immunotherapy Network
Le réseau canadien d'immunothérapie

MY ARRIVAL

THE LIVES OF NEW CANADIANS

“My ex-husband discovered that I helped my daughters leave Iran. I had to flee next.”

After landing in Saskatoon, I worked long shifts as a security guard to survive

By Marzieh Tohidi

IN 1978, MY PARENTS ARRANGED MY MARRIAGE. At 16 years old, I stood across from my new husband in my father’s house and became a wife. I was forced to leave school in Grade 9. Five years later, soon after I gave birth to our third daughter, my husband left me for another woman because I couldn’t bear him a son. I was still married to him, with few financial prospects, so some mothers in the neighbourhood raised money to send me to hairdresser school. They said, “Once you finish, we will be your customers.” I was thrilled: styling hair made me happy, and I found community at the salon.

When I walk past a salon, I remember the laughter in Tehran

I re-entered high school at 23 years old, and the courses introduced me to Christianity. One Sunday morning I went to a cathedral for the first time, stopping in just for a few minutes because I was afraid my husband would find me. As a government worker, he had informants everywhere. Sure enough, he was waiting for me outside. That same day, he came to my home and broke my right hand and left leg. When he found out I was teaching my daughters about Christianity, he divorced me. One week later, the government took my apartment and I fled to another part of Tehran with my children, leaving my salon behind. There it was: my livelihood and my connection to the community, all gone.

In 2004, I learned that my ex-husband was arranging marriages for my twentysomething daughters. I would never allow my children to live through what I survived. With the help of my friends, I secured travel visas: my two eldest daughters went to France and my youngest to India. I stayed in Iran, but two years later, my ex-husband discovered that I had helped my daughters flee. This time, he broke my left hand and right leg.

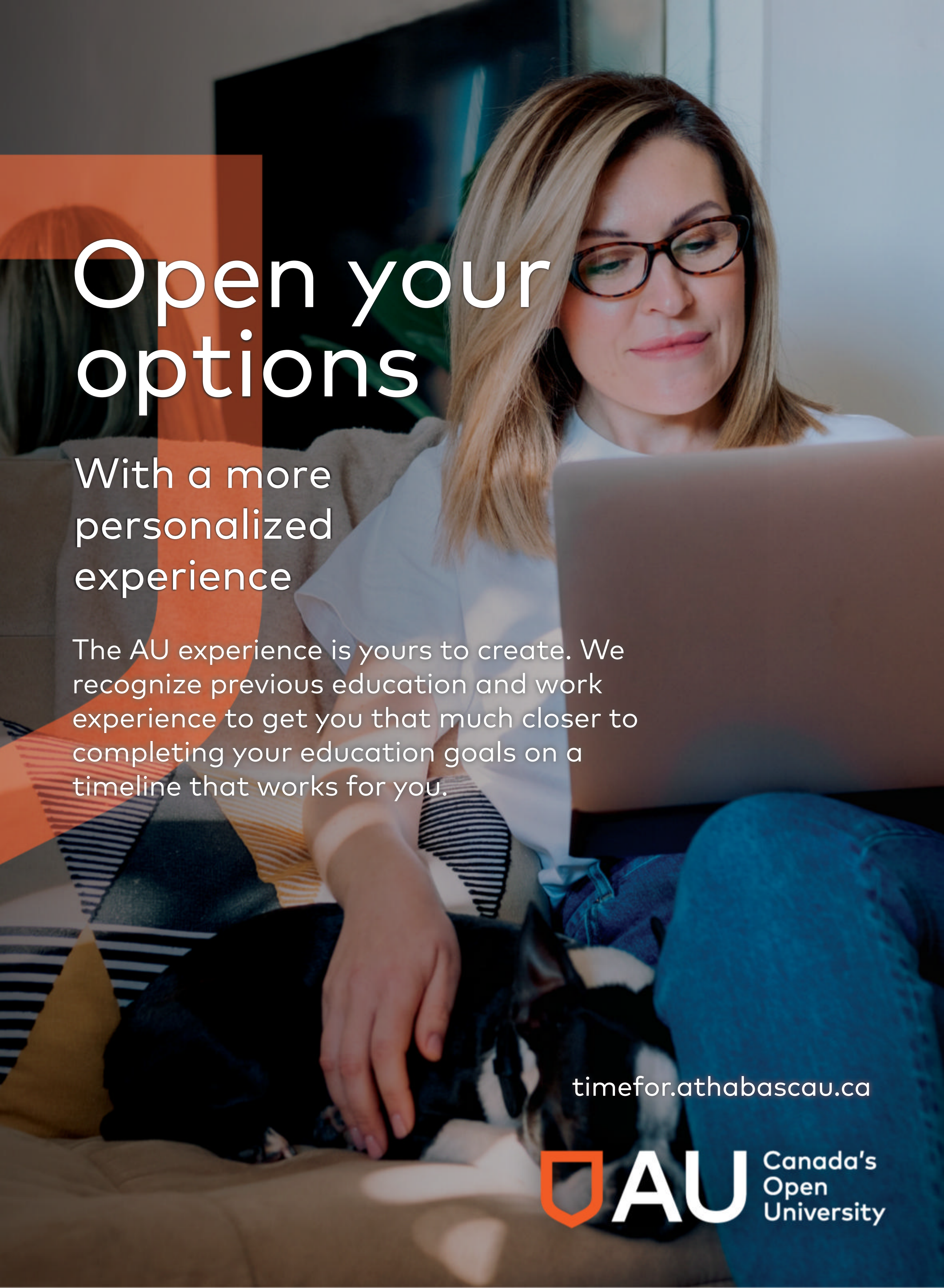
I was devastated: I had little left at home in Iran, so I fled. I knew that if I left, I could never come back. I travelled to the United Arab Emirates in 2008 on a tourist visa, and after six years, moved to Turkey as a refugee. There I worked at an Anglican church in the British embassy until 2014, when the church sponsored me to move to the other side of the world: Saskatoon. Even though I knew nothing about that city, I was sure my ex-husband would never find me there.

In August, I took a day-long flight to Canada and ended up in a bed-and-breakfast in Saskatoon, which the church agreed to pay for until I could find my own place. I lived there for a month before moving into a one-bedroom apartment. It was a lot smaller than Iran’s subsidized housing, and I could barely afford the $860 monthly rent—my welfare payments were only $910 per month. My plan had been to become a hairstylist, but it wasn’t possible. I would have needed to go to school, and I couldn’t afford not to work. Instead I got a job at a security company, picking up night shifts at sites three hours away, working 14-hour days. I didn’t know if this lifestyle would be sustainable: the days were lonely, the winters brutally cold.

I started my own company two years later, deploying a network of security guards who respond to emergencies, direct traffic and ensure safety at work sites. A government loan helped establish my business, and I used my entrepreneurial experience from the salon to grow my company. I figured that having my own firm would lead to a comfortable retirement. The business is thriving, but I am getting tired. I’ve spent nine years in Canada with barely any days off. I work every day for 14 to 18 hours, only sleeping four hours a night, and I still don’t have enough savings to retire.

Of course, I’m better off here. I thank God that I’ve made it to Canada, healthy and safe. I don’t have a husband haunting me. I’ve made a group of new friends, and I speak to my daughters every week. I’m not lonely anymore. But when I walk downtown and come across a beauty salon, I always peek through the window. I remember the laughter in Tehran, and the joy I felt helping clients feel beautiful. Now, that dream has passed me by. When I walk away from the window, I can’t help but think, *That could have been me*. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY **VICTOR KERLOW**



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